NMA

People are using sound like toilet paper.

Music and art are indeed necessary, but they are not necessities of life.

The result is that if your activities are not intended to produce income, you can't deduct the expenses.

To turn one's back on what appears to be fundamental to music has always seemed to me to be rather foolish.

Moreover, it inhibits any performer/computer interaction whatsoever.

And where is the tonality in the above?

1

$4.00

New Music Articles

CONTENTS

An interview with Jon Rose 2

The Computer-Controlled Piano: New Instrument, New Performer.
Alistair Riddell 6

Schoenberg, Weill, and the Musical Cause: Once More into the Fray. A Discussion of Methods and Ideals.
Jody Berland. 10

How to be a great composer. . .
Warren Burt 17

Tonality: Is the Tonic on the Rocks? 21

On the Artist's Self-Understanding and Tasks
Mauricio Kagel 28

Essendon Airport
Ian Cox 30

Report: SYNTST
An Interactive Synthesis Program for the Development of Timbre.
Graeme Gerrard 34

Computer Music from Graphics:
A Brief Report on Research in Progress at LaTrobe University.
Brian Parish 35

The Brahmin's Son: An Analysis.
David Hirst 37

A Financial Composition
(in $ flat minor)
Peter Herzstein 41

EDITORIAL

One outstanding feature of late Twentieth Century musical activity is that a wide diversity of viewpoints exists. Musical writings have recently appeared in periodicals not specifically devoted to music per se, but to the arts in general; thus, we believe, calling a need for a magazine of this nature.
With this first issue of NMA we call attention to this diversity. A conscious effort has been made to avoid the embrace of a particular ideological viewpoint, but rather to adopt a pluralist attitude. Hence our initial concern is with documentation, an objective which will be carried into later issues.

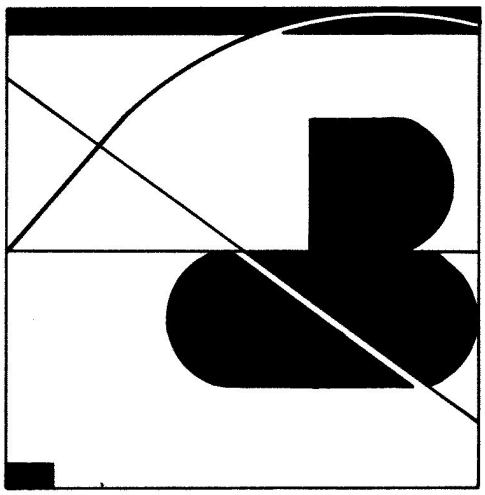
We present an interview with **Jon Rose,** a Sydney-based musician concerned with free improvisation on the violin and cello, and the rebuilding and extension of stringed instruments.
Alistair Riddell, a Melbourne-based composer, has been developing the player piano concept of the American composer Conlon Nancarrow on a specially designed computer-controlled piano. His article represents both a description of the instrument and some of the compositional implications peculiar to it.
Also included are two articles from overseas writers. An article on the artist's self-understanding and tasks is provided by **Mauricio Kagel,** which to our knowledge is the first English translation. The Canadian writer **Jody Berland** presents a comparison between Arnold Schoenberg and Kurt Weill, and their approaches to the development of a musical style and language.
Warren Burt gives a personal view on the necessary qualities needed in a great composer. His observations give reference to current compositional attitudes.

A symposium on tonality, compiled earlier this year, is also included in this issue.

Ian Cox of **Essendon Airport** has written an 'interview' explaining the musical aesthetic from which this band operates. This article will hopefully be of interest to those musicians working in a more popular idiom, as well as those involved in other areas.

A series of reports and an analysis of computer synthesis from LaTrobe University Music Department is presented here in order to show the current developments from this installation. We hope to provide reports of computer synthesis work being carried out at other centres in future issues. A cassette recording featuring compositions resulting from this research is available from NMA Publications.

The practical developments of the computer articles are extended into the social sphere with an article concerning taxation and the performing artist. Although musicians in general live at the bottom end of the tax scale, we feel that this article is timely and necessary since most musicians are unaware of the intricacies of taxation law and how it applies to them. This should also be of interest to anyone involved in other areas of the arts.



Editors: Rainer Linz, Richard Vella
Typesetting: Bel Air Graphics (03) 376 8405
E.A.C. (03) 329 5519
El Faro (02) 698 9826
Designed at Bel Air Graphics
Published by N.M.A. Publications
Printed by Photo Offset Productions
(03) 419 5344

Illustrations: Raymond Falzon (02) 868 3870
Lisa Faure-Brac (02) 80 5618
Hugo Farmer (02) 818 4909
Robert Hood (02) 818 4089
Janet Lane (02) 86 5851
Kris Rose (02) 455 1443

©Copyright 1982 N.M.A. Publications
Special thanks: Rod Giles
John Jenkins
Robert Kenny
Ann Kilby
Lisa Meli

The publication of this magazine has been assisted by the Music Board of the Australia Council.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JON ROSE[1]

RV: First of all, do you see your approach to your violin playing and making in relation to any tradition?
J.R.: The violin developments mainly come out of playing the instrument itself. One aspect is that the more I play it the more I see where certain projections can go. Another aspect is that the developments come out of the instrument itself. That is to say: one can look at the violin historically. A lot of the inspiration for some of the things that I have done with violins has come from the history of violin making. The period up to Stradivarius is probably the most interesting because the violin didn't have an official shape, viewpoint, way of being played or sound. It certainly didn't have an official tuning. One can look at a book on old instruments prior to Stradivarius and see instruments with strings going all over the place. An example of this is the Lyra da Braccia. In terms of the string tradition, once one looks outside the west one can see a whole glut of string instruments which use lots of strings which can either be played or are symphathetic. The symphathetic strings were used to enhance the natural resonance of the instrument and to accentuate any kind of system for ordering pitches that might be in use. That's why all the symphathetic strings went out of use in the west because people wanted to suddenly go in and out of keys. So string instruments had to become diverse which in fact started to get away from the very nature of the instruments themselves. People were no longer concerned with the instrument but with another language and hence the instrument had to connect to that language. Most music up to this change of thinking, composer dominated music, came directly out of playing the instrument.

R.V.: How do you go about making instruments?
J.R.: I buy a whole load of cheap Chinese violins, the cheaper the better. Even though they are mass produced each one seems to want to go a certain way. One such violin has a megaphone and pickup on the outside and inside is an amplifier similar to a six watt amplifier you can find in a transistor radio. The megaphone is very useful for the violin because it is very efficient; its range is the middle to upper middle frequency response. It also has an F.M. radio microphone built onto the bridge enabling me amplified mobility. The sound I get depends exactly on the size of the F.M. receiver speaker. With a very small speaker I'm dealing with various upper partials of the harmonic series. With a decent hi fi set I am able to produce the full bottom end of the harmonic series as well. Sometimes I might get an idea if I've been doodling around in my sketch books but I don't work out an idea then rush off, get a violin and built it. I've tried that in the past and somehow it doesn't work out that way. I tend to keep my whole approach to instrument building in a state of flux of ideas and instruments.

R.V.: What difference do you see between yourself and Harry Partch?
J.R.: His approach is a composer-oriented approach. He had an idea then set about building the instruments to get across the idea. My bias is towards the instrument supplying as much of the stimulant to the method of playing and the resultant sounds. The instrument is supplying as much as me.

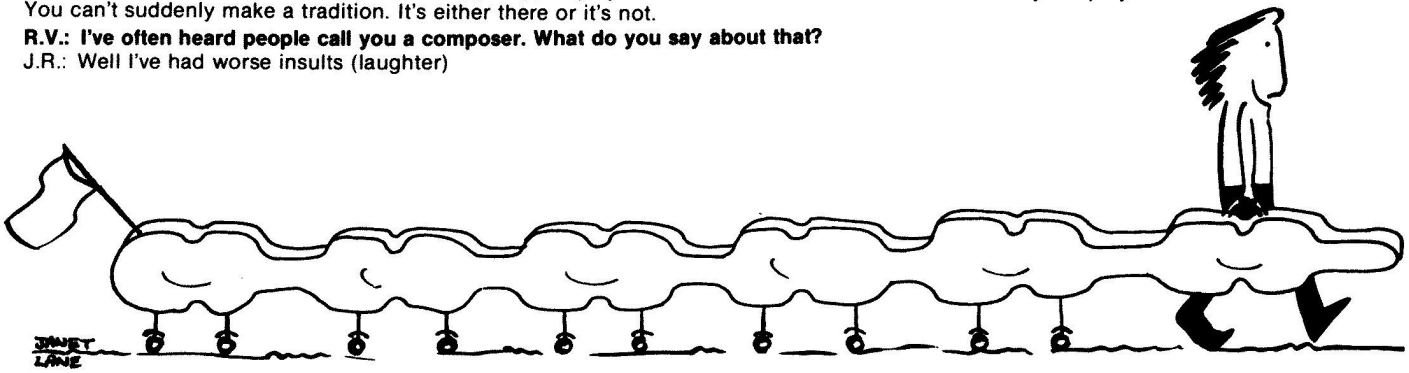
R.V.: Just as you see yourself in a tradition of instrument making, do you see yourself in any other tradition?
J.R.: Yes. I see myself in a performance tradition, the western performance tradition naturally. The kind of tradition is the pre-composition European tradition. That of course relates completely to the Islamic playing tradition. There the string instrument in the Islamic tradition is the strongest instrument after percussion. That influenced the western string tradition and was the centre of string playing for the whole world really. It's very critical I think to understand something of that. A lot of the techniques I use are traditional—I don't go in for copyright but most individual string improvisers have their own personal collection of techniques. Some would have their own playing experiences. I use double bow, curve bowing, ricochet, spiccato, and polyrhythmic techniques in a way that are personal to me.
way that are personal to me.

R.V.: What difference is there between your approach to violin and cello improvising to other players?
J.R.: Most improvising string players tend to perceive their instrument as very one dimensional. As a contradiction to the historical aspects of the violin and cello, I have a very fundamental approach. This is that both instruments are just boxes with air in and around them which I can make vibrate in as many ways as I like. Strings are just one source for making the air vibrate; plastics, metals and wood are also good triggers for this. On the cello I have a mutiplicity of events happening. Of course any string instrument has a built in problem which is that one hand is involved in generating a sound. The basic theory is that the right hand generates the sound while the left hand modulates it. I have mixed that up a bit by making the right hand modulate too, rhythmically certainly. I've done a lot of work on various kinds of spiccato techniques. From the jazz tradition I have worked the idea of the right hand having very complex pizzicato techniques.

R.V.: By complex do you mean that the various pizzicato techniques produce different timbres?
J.R.: Yes, also textural and rhythmic control by using one, two or three fingers. The same can be said for the bowings I use.

R.V.: You once said that your music has an affinity to early music in particular Baroque music. Apart from the obvious connection being the improvisational aspect, what other similarities are present?
J.R.: The main similarities are the multiplicity of events, counterpoint (including rhythmic and textural) and that the nature of the instruments are fundamental to the music. The essence of string playing in the Baroque time was the 'messa di voce' stroke. A very light fast stroke which gave each note its own individual life. It was a Webernesque concept of sound; 'Klangfarben' melody was alive and well up to the end of the Baroque period. Before the Baroque period, going right back steadily into the middle ages when the major world force would have been Islamic music, Western music would have probably sounded like that, if anything. The early music that I hear on the radio is so diabolically pretty, the players would have had their heads cut off if they had played like that then. You can't suddenly make a tradition. It's either there or it's not.

R.V.: I've often heard people call you a composer. What do you say about that?
J.R.: Well I've had worse insults (laughter)



[1]Interview recorded 28/3/82. Edited by Richard Vella.

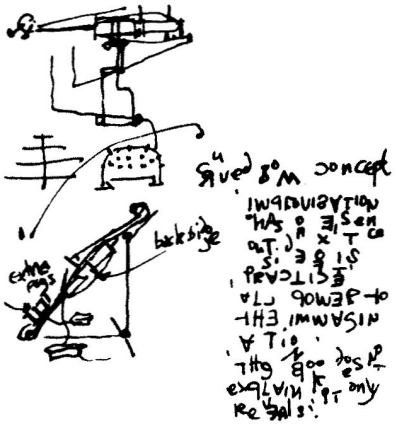
Kristine Rose

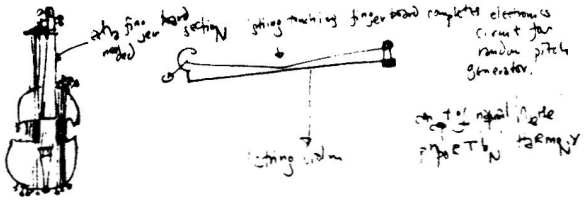
R.V.: What do you define as a composer?
J.R.: I received a grant once for being a composer. I defined the work as someone who makes and arranges . . . makes something else. Bill Motzing[2] once told me that in his opinion a composer is somebody who is on the phone. Some people who have the tag "composer" to me have very little musicality in them. By that I mean that they have very little contact, feeling or spirit. It's not in them.
R.V.:What isn't?
J.R.:A response to the nature of sound and music. An intuition if you like. A lot of people can compose, it's like any skill I suppose. You can just acquire it like maths, physics . . . it's a craft.
Because composition goes on 70% of the time in the abstract, the process of composition is not actually concerned with sound. Consequently any music produced from that process to me sounds totally unrealistic and is reasonably valueless. It's like someone who is very good at producing plans for painting with numbers.
R.V.:But then how do you reckon with a composer like Milton Babbitt whose compositional method would be the pinnacle of what you have just been talking about but also whose music you have said that you have liked?
J.R.: When I say I like his music, it's more of an admiration for his music. I actually think that Milton Babbitt in some incredible way is totally in contact with what he does. Even though I find the whole process of composition to be alien to the nature of music that does not mean to say that I don't like certain composers. That's bullshit. I can sit back and go "wow" over a bit of Mahler like anybody else. I can't take it seriously mind you (laughter). Just because a few people have made this strange process of composition work for them, it doesn't necessarily mean that it's the best method of music making. One thing that appeals to me about Babbitt's work (whatever the total illusion) is that it seems to have energy. It also shows an alive mind and a very practical down to earth nature. Those are the three things which I just like and I don't have to justify them.
R.V.: To say that of Babbitt means that there must be established overseas composers who are not to you 'composers'?
J.R.: They're composers, they have the label. I'm talking about value.
R.V.: Well the 'composer' in the Jon Rose dictionary (laughter).
J.R.: I dislike intensely composers who go around copyrighting sound, particularly the rest of the world's musical tradition too. Stockhausen is amazing at that. The things that he has put his name to, which have become avante-garde or hip, aren't actually much out of the western musical tradition they are basically out of the world tradition. Music which is thousands and thousands of years old. He just suddenly comes along and puts a copyright on it. I think that that is absolutely amazing. Pure capitalism. The same with Bob Dylan, black music, it doesn't make any difference; it's part of the same thing. Some of his stuff I quite like in the same way as I like bits of composed music all the way down; you'd think there would be by the amount of stuff he's churned out. But some of it is just so bad, particularly the pseudo-improvisational work. A bunch of neurotic academics who are trying to be animal.
R.V.: Would you agree that the problem with improvisation in mainstream contemporary music is that it always seems to come from an intellectual base first?
J.R.: Totally. Somebody decides that it's going to happen for a start off as a compositional element.
R.V.: What do you define as a musician?
J.R.: My answer would have to be such a personal one.
R.V.: But don't all your other views on composition and improvisation emanate from this?
J.R.: The improvisor I think first and foremost is in contact. That may sound really cosmic or spiritual but it isn't. It's really down to earth. It's a sensitivity. To most people sensitivity means playing a note on a Chinese gong every five hours. Unless you happen to be a Buddhist monk, I think this might turn out to be a bit of a hype. Sound is really a volatile thing. Uncontrollable. It can be a very naughty boy.
R.V.: Would you agree that the actual process of making sound is a violent act in that it is a disturbance of air?
J.R.: Yes, it's force, energy . . . movement. A person I would call a musician is a person who is in contact with that. Before anything else it's got to be that. Next, it's a question of trust. Those people who have the intuition, trust and creativity to take sound on its own merits and go wherever it goes.
To me music is something which you cannot hold onto. It's totally transitory in nature. Most methods of making music do not take that into consideration . . . or maybe they do, they are trying to control sound. People try to make it something which is a commodity, which has a distinct life, start, end, cost, loudness, whatever. In other words they want to make it like every other boring part of their linear lifestyle. To me the essence of sound is not like that. It's not an insurance. A musician realizes that. Unfortunately 99.9% of musicians do not. They don't want it to be like that either because their lifestyle depends on not trying to make it like that. And that aural perceptiveness is something you can pick in someone. It doesn't necessarily relate to how sophisticated they are. I'm not talking about degrees of sophistication in music.
The acquisition of sound is something to be very careful of, particularly in a world where communication is now so fast. Sound in itself is so sophisticated and complex. It has so much and people now can just go and grab it, take it, from anywhere, anybody and use it. Generally the level of musical perception is about as deep as a record shop. Musicians will have to work harder and harder if they are going to add anything of value to an already overcrowded aural environment.
R.V.: How does this relate to the composer?
J.R.: If you're an athlete, you would be a very rare person if you can be world champion at every single event that exists. That's what the current composer aspires to be in some respects. Take a look at the Indian musician who has been seemingly plodding away (although he doesn't think so) at his one instrument for three thousand years, or whatever. He is probably in much closer contact with the nature of music than anybody who is jumping around ripping off temple gongs from one place and god knows what from somewhere else to put together 'pieces'.
R.V.: On one level you are talking about a corruption of a tradition; on the other hand, isn't the composer or musician using a sound for that sound's sake?
J.R.: That's where an improvisors viewpoint is so different. If I play a pitch, for example an 'A', I have very many ways of presenting that same pitch on my instrument. Each method of presenting that pitch will change the timbre. Not radically. It won't sound suddenly like a steam roller or trumpet. The change is radical to me because it involves physical movement. The physiological difference in sound through playing it is very different and important. That also refers to the physiological difference when playing with someone else, or by yourself, in a room or outside. All these aspects which are determined by a point in time are really crucial to the nature of music and sound.
I'm not talking about influence. Everybody is influenced, I'm influenced, Beethoven's influenced, you're influenced. That's good, it's a fluidity . . . a mobility . . . of sound and time. That's different to wholesale rip-off with no regard for the nature and context of sound. And that is really current today. Not just in classical music, but right through music. People are using sound like toilet paper.
R.V.: For example.
J.R.: Rock Music. Apart from giving musicians mobile electronics it has just about ripped everything off blind in a most incredible way. It's an art form in itself in the way it has been done. Jazz is like that. It is totally establishment music now. It's music with a formula. It's killed itself. Watching a jazz performance these days is like watching someone committing suicide. With any aural tradition where the stimulus for change is an aural one and it is suddenly taken and fixed in time and space, as what has happened with jazz, death is around the corner. Within all these forms there are good things done periodically. I don't know . . . it worries me, sometimes, I think "am I just a complete egomaniac or just outside of everything?" Because I really can't see very much that's being done which has integrity and which is about this nature of music we are trying to define. Because I'm not talking about people having to be innovative, like in the sixties, it's a question of getting on with your own work. Just playing music in a given situation.

[2]American trombonist, composer and commerical arranger.

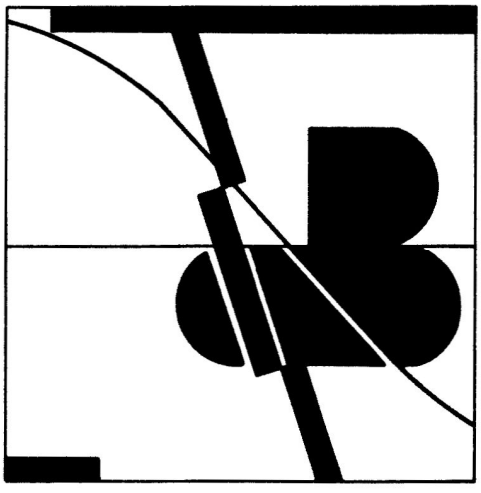
R.V.: Composition has often been said to be a kind of improvisation. Do you see any similarities?
J.R.: In improvisation no one pretends that you are living or meeting in the same time slot. In fact, the difference between the players is probably the main reason why improvisors play together. To check out the differences. In composition there is the assumption that somehow you are all going to be in the same time slot. That goes in all kinds of music: Rock music talks about a tight band; people talk about how an orchestra plays as one. All of this is illusionary. It's an artificial situation. Improvisation doesn't try to emulate an artificial situation. Each improvisation either stands or falls on very basic inputs.
R.V.: Couldn't you view composition like that also but only involving a different time span?
J.R.: I don't think so. When people judge a composition competition—unless they are masters of time travel or something—they would not have heard the submitted compositions, other than what they imagined of a piece of paper with black lines on it. That is considered to be some kind of normality in composition. Now sure that might be a reactionary statement, but that inference goes through the works of even the most avant-garde experimental composers. Because they are concerned with making things whereas an improvisor doesn't sit down and decide to make a piece. In composition the piece exists outside of it being played. In improvisation it doesn't, other than on a record or tape.
R.V.: Then why make a record?
J.R.: Because it's a total contradiction. It might get you some money or some more gigs, and everybody hears their music like that anyway. A record in terms of improvising musicians is like sending a letter or postcard saying: "look, I sound a bit like this".
R.V.: But isn't that the same as a score, a documentation of an event?
J.R.: No, it's not. In a score you actually try to make music to fit or reflect that score otherwise there's no point in having a score. A record is a documentation. You can't write a score after the composition has been played. To most improvisors a record has very little worth. There are exceptions of course. It's very nice to have it recorded and to have people hear it in other countries without the effort of having to go there and play it. That's part of the society we live in. You can either choose to turn your back on it completely, which is something I have thought about, or you accept it. Immediately you accept it you have to decide whether you have anything worth doing or not. If you think you are worth it then you are in competition with a lot of other people who think what they are doing is better than you. Immediately you are in a compromise situation. There is no pretending otherwise. It's just realizing what, why, how and when you do it.
R.V.: What effect does an audience have on you?
J.R.: Two minutes after starting the twelve hour violin solo I gave at the City Art Institute of Sydney[3], I didn't really care who was listening. But when I'm facing an audience of two thousand, there is immediately psychological pressure on me to perform, to do tricks. It's interesting how people approach this. I actually find myself more relaxed in that situation than playing to twenty people in an art gallery. Somehow the scale is that much bigger that it doesn't mean anything. I'm quite keyed up to play but when I start I'm really very loose about it. There's more tension at a smaller concert. Those pressures come in . . . they add . . . they change a performance.
R.V.: How do you feel about electronics now?
J.R.: Well I've been using it for a number of years both as a straight amplification and treatments. I use electronics as an extension of playing, extensions of the sound possibilities of the instruments that I start with. But electronics still present many, many questions which I can't answer. All I seem to get is another question all the time. I find myself in a dilemma with them. I go for periods of not using electronics at all and then all of a sudden I use them again. And then I think: "oh, they're getting in the way". And so I don't use them for another period of months. Electronics to me is a big confrontation. Maybe it's a confrontation within myself, I don't know. In terms of mobility and portability, which is the kind of small cheap electronics that I use, they are in some ways a liberating factor for a musician, particularly in solo work. But at other times they seem to become a barrier between myself and the practice of improvisation.

[3]Date of performance: 19/3/82.



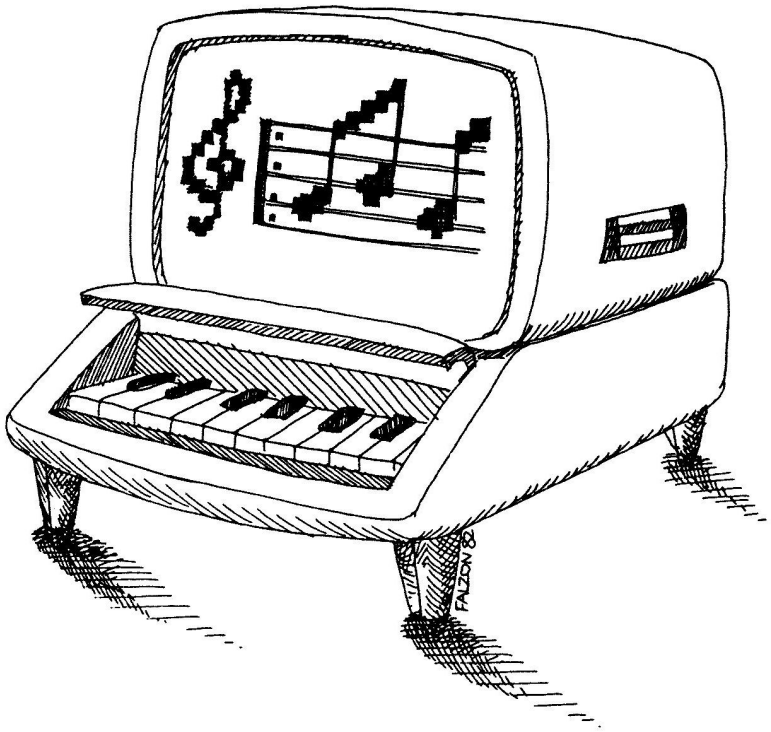


Recordings and information on Jon Rose may be obtained from: Fringe Benefit Records
179 Bourke St.
Woolloomooloo N.S.W.
2011.
Australia



THE COMPUTER-CONTROLLED PIANO: NEW INSTRUMENT, NEW PERFORMER

Alistair Riddell



In late 1981 John Luke (computer and Electronics engineer) and myself began work on interfacing a computer with a piano, with the intention of developing a computer-controlled acoustic composition and performance medium. At the time of writing this article compositions have already been performed on the system with encouraging results. The complexity of the system and its compositional demands , however necessitate continued software and hardware development. Due to the rate of this development, discussion in this article is confined to the first generation system; a proven straightforward version. Counterbalancing this retrospective view is one directed towards future extensions and developments.

The concept of controlling a piano with a computer was largely the result of inspiration and study in the music of Conlon Nancarrow. This particular approach to the medium came about through understanding Nancarrow's, then considering how computer technology could expand composition and performance possibilities. The player piano studies of Nancarrow are certainly impressive, reflecting the potential of the piano as a sound source when liberated from human performance criteria. His system, developed over a period of years, was instigated by particular compositional demands. The pneumatic player piano, in this instance, is thus paradoxically unique; a common household instrument becomes a composition and performance medium of staggering complexity. Intensely personal, as his medium is, the fascination for it is attributable to the acoustic and mechanical properties of the piano. The sheer physical operation of the instrument, functioning as it does beyond comprehension, is unnerving, but composing this music is a slow and painstaking task. It takes about an hour to punch 0.8 seconds of music, with no simple way of correcting errors or modifying sections other than to begin again. Obtaining a satisfactory result necessitates extensive preliminary work and patience.

The quintessential forms of computer-produced misic attain 'absolutes' in diversity of sounds, accuracy of interpretation and control that is unprecedented. It is perhaps those forms' greatest and only 'raison d' etre', since they are not manifestly absolutes in a computer-controlled instrument medium. The essential difference is in 'cause and effect', where a cut off point exists between the computer's instruction set and the resulting sounds. The computer's control is therefore not absolute. In a minimal way, the word 'interpretation' reappears with it's traditional real-time performance implications, as consecutive executions of a composition may differ slightly. Although an inherent condition of this mechanical medium, variations generally occur (or can be made to occur) within acceptable limits.

Like Nancarrow's medium, the one under discussion here also makes use of a player piano mechanism that has has a primary and commercial function in transient entertainment. Unlike his, however, it is a digital / electronic system that is more subtle and flexible.* The piano roll, for example, is replaced by a digital cassette which can be used for recording or playing back through the piano. The player mechanism consists of a data storage unit (digital cassette), record and playback logic boards, solenoid driver boards, and

the pedal and key solenoids. This original system has a simple hardware computer (logic boards) that accepts and sorts data sent from the cassette. The status of the keyboard is updated 35 times a second, the data for one 35th of a second being contained in a 'frame' of 16 bytes. Notes can be played (except for repeated notes), pedals and dynamic levels set or altered within this fraction of a second. There are theoretically 32 linear dynamic levels, but this range more accurately refers to the pulse widths sent to the solenoids. It should, and perhaps does mean that there are 32 different hammer velocities, however. The complex nature of sound production in the piano inhibits this initial steady state function being translated into a corresponding sound pressure level at all times, with all notes and under all conditions. Although not a serious problem , further investigation and experimentation, especially in situations where the action is extremely active, may lead to a more effective use of the 32 functions. Only 2 different dynamics can be performed simultaneously and this is dependant on them being in the 2 halves of the key-board (the center of the key-board is E and F above middle C). The general design of the mechanism has been well thought-out, but when interfaced with a computer, some of it becomes redundant and for advanced composition, hardware modification is necessary.

Interfacing an external computer system creates a composition and performance medium similar to Nancarrow's, but extended in a number of important areas. The fundamental role of the computer is to allow access to the 'frames' for the input of score information. It is critical that the computer uses an output program for this data which will be accepted by the player mechanism. The implication here is that the program must set up an artificial or substitute data format (as opposed to the format inherent in the mechanism) which is 'blank',and can thus be filled with the appropriate compositional information. Such a 'blank frame', that is, one which is suitable for transmission but contains no score information, for one 35th of a second, would look like this;

$$00\ 00\ \overline{00\ 00\ 00\ 00\ 00}\ 00\ 00\ \overline{00\ 00\ 00\ 00\ 00}\ 00\ \ BF$$

This is a hexadecimal representation, the mechanism only accepts it in binary notation. All but 3 of the pairs of 00's have specific functions. The bracketed pairs are for the notes and the 'BF' is for frame demarcation.

The most important function that the computer offers to the composer is the ability to manipulate data. This editing feature is very useful, not only at a local level, but also to obtain the most successful version of the composition. For example, the work is entered into the computer and then stored on floppy disk as a file. Many modified versions of the original can be created and stored under different file names. Modifications can range from the correction of errrors to major structural changes, and can be carried out without having to reenter the entire work. As well as this, the composition can be heard minutes after alterations are completed. These are natural functions of the computer, in this case, internal prerequisites for coping with it's external ramifications.

The use of the computer and electronic technology is analogous to that of a key which can unlock doors to new unexplored areas, off from a familiar room. Certainly, it can be used to explore the new frontiers; however, these domains are not defined by the computer or the electronics but by the piano. This instrument, with it's peculiar mechanical and structual characteristics, creates the boundaries. What these are, (even subtly, between different piano models) is unknown in this context. They will not only be the extent to which compositional ideas can be taken before confronting the physical limitations of the instrument, but also the points where ideas fail to be expressed effectively. Unfortunately, it is easier to imagine what the system can't do than to define the limits of what it can.

Well within the capabilities of the system is the ability to give accurate, impressive interpretations of humanly playable works, but this seems a misuse of it's potential and will not be attempted with this particular system. The value and fascination of the medium exists because little is known about sound structures which are not subject to conditions of human performance. Nancarrow hinted at some of these. He showed that 'tempo' could change the perception of common pitch structures or transform others into psuedo-recognizable effects. Many compositional techniques perculiar to this medium emerge from the use of tempo and/or temporal relationships.

The ability to play notes extremely fast is fundamental to the system. Also fundamental is autonomy in executing notes. In combination , they create one interesting compositional technique, as yet somewhat unexplored. This can be described as 'Aggregate Architecture'. A generic term, succinctly explained as the consecutive performance of a group of notes at such a speed that the pitches themselves lose their individual significance in part, and function in outlining a superstructure. The peculiar thing about aggregates is that they can possess a temporal quality of their own, independent of the exterior

tempo of the composition. The effect is accentuated on the piano because a dualism exists for the listener, being conditioned for individual pitch recognition. The possible combinations of aggregate structures are astronomical. Any attempt to define and categorize them would require some formal system which was, perhaps, a fusion of Forte and Schenkarian analytical techniques. Even then, in writing a composition with aggregates, their effect or success could not be accepted 'a priori'. Elements of an aggregate,especially on the piano, influence each other in ways that are not entirely predictable. Nancarrow's 'study No 25' is a compendium of aggregate usage, with some stunning examples. Cross-referencing the recording with the score is an interesting experience in isomorphic mapping.

Since the piano has new performance capabilities, the discussion of aggregate is an attempt to show the need to change the traditional pianistic thinking for this particular medium. For almost everyone, piano music is conceived in terms of a mind/hand interface and perceived as the resultant physical/intellectual interaction. The problem in writing music that reflects the potential of the medium is to avoid conceiving the sound as a product of human physical action. Certainly, there is nothing to exclude this compositional approach, except that it may inhibit understanding and use. The more complex the composition and system, the more this hands-off approach will become necessary.

While it is important when composing for this medium to rethink the concepts of general pianistic techniques, it is also critical that the listener can perceive the composition appropriately. To facilitate this, a modification to the piano's basic sound seems necessary.** A fundamental modification that alters the instrument's sound can be achieved by increasing the hardness of the hammers. Although the ramifications of this are complex and specifications as to 'how hard (?)'will not be expounded here, it appears nevertheless a favourable modification to make. There are a number of reasons for this:

1. The hardness of the hammer increases the audibility of the upper harmonics of a pitch (hopefully not at the expense of the fundamental or lower harmonics), improving the perception of that note. This is important when playing vast quantities of notes.

2. From experience, the performance of notes at the top end of the piano (with standard hammers) at a fortissimo or louder dynamic level, produce a percussion noise equal in amplitude to the pitch itself. An interesting effect but not desirable in all compositions.

3. The hardness of the hammer may also improve it's rebound time, which is critical for single note repetitions. Intuitively it seems probable that this is the case, but by how much is difficult to calculate because of the different lengths and numbers of strings to each note.

A most desirable situation, from both a compositional and performance perspective, would be where, for one piano, there were perhaps 4 actions, each fitted with a set of hammers different in density and mass from those on the other actions. The tonal quality of the piano could change in minutes, simply by replacing one action with another.

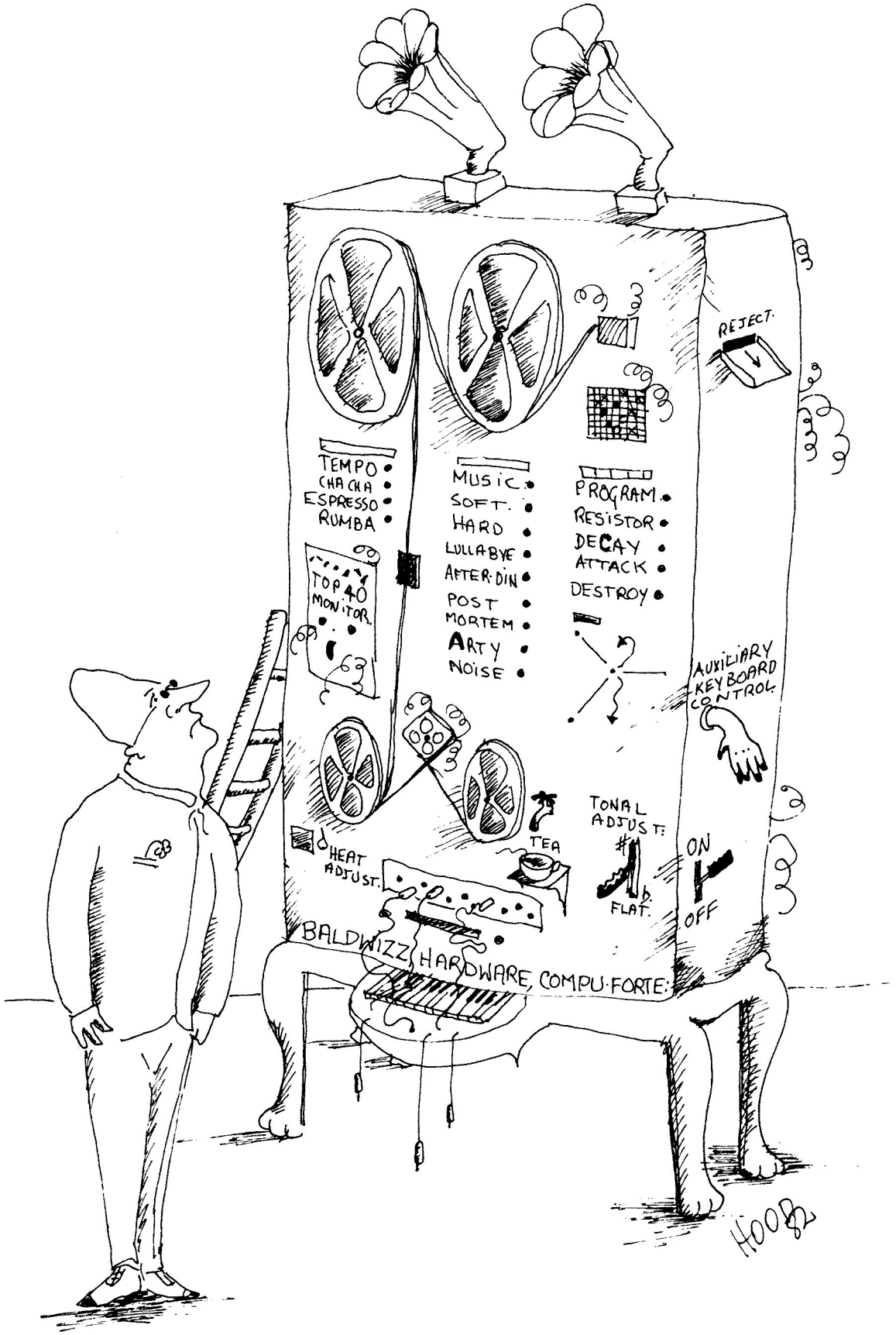
So far, consideration of the system has been confined to the computer only one ordinary upright piano (with modifications). The computer's sphere of influence, however, can extend to controlling more than one piano (grand pianos if they are available). Complete with the many modifications that the piano can sustain, the whole system becomes very complex and probably represents the most extreme extension of it in terms of non-human involvement.

The possibilities for human involvement, as a matter of conjecture, appear to be extensive. Some ideas have evolved through studying the nature of the system and seem feasible in the near future, however it is not in this general direction that the system is heading.

Well, enough of the hypothetical considerations, they go on and on. At this point, it should be clear, nevertheless, that the system is capable of being used in many different ways. Development potential is enormous, at least until the piano, as only one acoustic medium, is thoroughly exploited and then.....

* The following discussion of the player mechanism is confined to it's standard version, to at least provide a fundamental understanding. To discuss modifications (which are implied in the later discussion on composition techniques) would require a separate article.

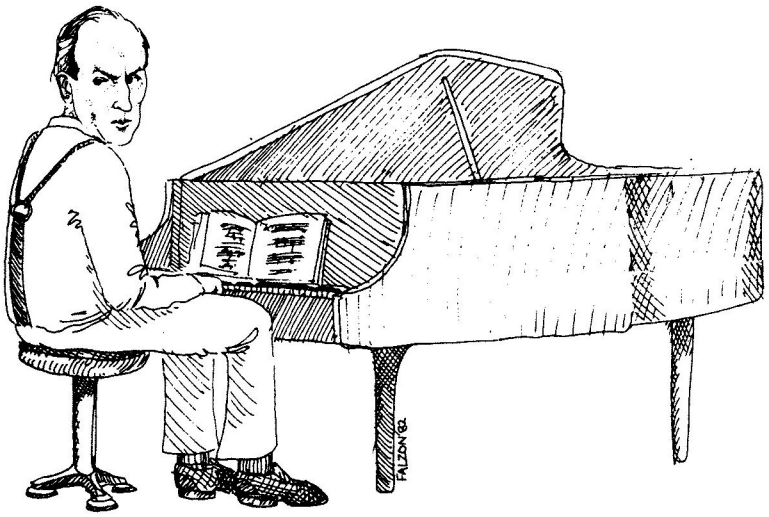
** The following is intended as a simple and somewhat expedient modification to the instrument compared with such complex and radical possibilities as 'altered tuning' and 'prepared piano techniques'.


REJECT.
TEMPO
CHA CHA
ESPRESSO
RUMBA
MUSIC
SOFT.
HARD
LULLABYE
AFTER-DIN
POST
MORTEM
ARTY
NOISE
PROGRAM
RESISTOR
DECAY
ATTACK
DESTROY
TOP 40
MONITOR.
AUXILIARY
KEYBOARD
CONTROL
TONAL
ADJUST:
TEA
HEAT
ADJUST.
ON
OFF
FLAT.
BALDWIZZ HARDWARE COMPU-FORTE:
HOOD 82

SCHOENBERG, WEILL, AND THE MUSICAL CAUSE: ONCE MORE INTO THE FRAY

A discussion of methods and ideals

Jody Berland



While writing this paper I played a performance of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's opera **Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny** (hereafter **Mahagonny**) for a friend whose interest had been catalysed by an earlier hearing of the **Threepenny Opera**. His response was immediate; with complete warmth and admiration, he said: "It's certainly totally German. You could never mistake it for anything else." Listening to the recording, I remembered Arnold Schoenberg's claim that his music would secure once again the international predominance of German music.[1] This was hardly Weill's own aim, as evident in the internationalism of his musical language. There are artistic intentions, and there is a cultural situation in which an artist is captured with various degrees and types of intentional participation. This is the discovery made by every student of Weimar culture of the 1920's. The interaction of situation (cultural, political, artistic, linguistic) and intention is nowhere so problematic and so fascinating in the work from this period, wherein this interaction became the focus, to an unprecedented extent, of artistic thought and practice. While the following discussion may appear to unduly emphasize artistic intention, such emphasis can be defended as my own response to the challenging dilemmas posed by this phenomenon. The situation in Germany at that time should not be forgotten. Here however I emphasize those critical problems which remain relevant to historical aesthetics and to cultural practice. The living relevance of the work of this period to such a discussion is corroboration of Schoenberg's claim. This is an achievement of profoundly ambivalent value.

* * * *

In 1926 a discussion of the renewal of opera in Germany erupted into a "journalistic controversy" touching on fundamental problems of musical and dramatic form.[2] This controversy was conducted through programmatic reference to the misdirected influence of Wagner on musical theatre, and to the necessity for a renewal of operatic form by means of a restoration of purely musical considerations. The anti-Wagnerian reaction was evident in works by quite different composers: Krenek, Weill, Hindemith, Busoni, Berg and Schoenberg all shared the aspiration to contribute to new directions for the opera. However from this common program their paths diverged, and the aesthetic principles which guided them were instrumental in generating a series of critical disputes. In keeping with the militant tone of the period, divisions organized themselves into apparently irreconcilable camps: Adorno immortalized these camps under the rubrics of progress and restoration.[3]

The tone of the composers' respective assertions is in keeping with the seriousness with which they sought to elaborate their commitments. In retrospect we can sense underlying similarities in the idealist rhetoric, the flavour of an unremitting search for new artistic principles, and the intense need to contribute to the future of art through coherent artistic **progress**. The historical situation offered challenges and demands for which many artists felt better equipped by their sense of artistic moral responsibility than by a clear or common artistic program. Their ideals encouraged both sympathetic support and vituperative criticism in response to the appearance of new works, as they alternately promoted, denounced, justified, and philosophized about the evident crisis in which artists felt themselves to be.

The purpose of this paper is to review the artistic "problems" confronting German composers during the Weimar period, and to pose these problems in the context of a critical discussion of the relationship between formal musical development and social context. My aim is not to provide analysis or aesthetic evaluation of individual works but to suggest an approach to

these works as articulations of the contradictory relationship of each composer to the material with which he worked. In elaborating the apparent and real polarisations of position between Arnold Schoenberg and Kurt Weill, I will disucss the relation of composer to material as an aspect of both aesthetic and social orientation. This comparison most easily exemplifies, for this period, the problems I want to consider involving the relationship between the given or historical "state" of musical and the social contextualization of its appropriation and extension.

The outrage with which so many significant new works in Weimar Germany were received in initial performance reveals the seriousness with which audiences, too, approached the meaning and value of music. Composers such as Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and ohers, were not seeking to provoke angry riots (with Weill this is not so clear!) but to introduce new works to an engaged and vigorous audience. It was not their explicit stand towards the audience which provoked their listeners but, more indirectly, their musical works. Their reception however indicates that audiences took the music seriously as a cultural discourse in which they felt themselves, and the composers, commited to participate.

What listeners may have understood intuitively from these works was an exclusion of themselves as actual public for the works, in favour of an "ideal public" which could share the purity of conviction of the artist.[4] The by now familiar theme of cultural or musical "crisis" was already evident to composers at that time, who were confronted not only with musical quandaries but also with an unprecedented distance between audience expectations and their own attempts toward solutions. Evidence for this awareness is to be found in the various attempts to remedy problematic relations between coherence and expression. Such tensions, and the responses to them, help explain the controversial nature of their reception then and even now; though such works are familiar enough to **sound** uncontroversial, their critical implications leave contemporary criticism and (one hopes) creative practice still struggling to resolve problems brought to the surface during the period with which we are concerned.

The re-evaluation of musical materials following the crisis of late Romanticism engendered new attitudes towards music: it tended to promote a newly conceptual or construction-oriented approach to the elements of music and at the same time turned attention towards the historical evolution of those elements.[5] These issues occupied the theoretical attention of composers and played an emphatic role in their approach to their work. The relationship between musical materials and musical ideas moved in to replace the "extra-musical" considerations of Romantic aesthetics as the point of departure for compositional method[6]. A preoccupation with the nature of style seems to be one unifying characteristic of this period, composing a kind of "cultural habitus" or shared understanding of the creative project.[7] But if style came to be commonly understood as inherently thematic, a diverse range of artistic responses resulted, motiviated by philosophically, socially, and artistically opposing responses to the powerfully felt dilemmas of German democracy.

The opposition between Schoenberg and Weill is most obvious in their respective responses to the rapid technological and cultural advances brought by radio and cinema. While Weill considered these media to offer possibilities for a new encounter between composers and a broader audience,[8] Schoenberg believed that such advances "removed from the traditional stage any further responsibilities toward the mass public, leaving it free to serve the more exclusive needs of the minority".[9] This meant, according to Schoenberg, a move towards greater depth and expressiveness: "opera will have to be an opera of musical ideas."[10] Schoenberg's insistence on ascribing inherent significance to each element of sound was typical of the Expressionist program and a substantial motivation for his rejection of the Romantic preservation of extended tonality." This insistence also motivated Schoenberg's rejection of many new works in contemporary opera, which he believed did not respond appropriately to the challenges of the musical situation but rather abandoned inherent aesthetic demands to the drive for popular success.[12] Of course the concept of "musical ideas" held connotations quite different from a similar commitment on Weill's part.

In formal terms their disagreement can be characterized in terms of opposing views on the method for fusing a mass of disparate elements of musical theatre into an artistic whole. Put simply, Schoenberg sought integration where Weill favoured contradiction between independent sections or elements of the work. For Schoenberg, **style** refers to an individual way of fusing together disparate elements in a work, while the more fundamental **idea** is the method by which balance is restored to the work's dynamic tension produced by musical movement.[13] This organizing principle is more or less identical to the conception of the work, which seeks to discover the unassailable identity between individual motif and total organization. In contrast Weill was actively assimilating the Brechtian concept of estrangement, itself appropriated from contemporaneous work by the Russian Formalists,[14] which emphasized conflicts or spaces between elements of the language as a method for articulating the dialectical contradictions inherent in the substance of the work.[15] Weill's "style" does not discover its necessity in an autonomous category of musical expression, but rather functionally: that is, not in terms of how an individual manifests him/herself through the use of musical materials, but as a "discourse" in which social experiences are represented musically and whose individuality derives from the transformation of meaning in this context. Weill was no less concerned than Schoenberg however with the necessity to create music according to logical underlying principles. He agreed that autonomous formal organization was an innate requirement for music, but called into question the notion that such principles are themselves an adequate foundation for the determination of artistic relationships — at least in musical theatre, to which he was by this time already committed.

Weill's early essays on opera call for a departure from Wagner's influence (which he condemns for its encouragement of literary packaging, verbosity, and false pathos) and for a return to opera constructed according to "purely musical precepts."[16] His aims are here conceived aesthetically: to provide a new clarity and precision of expression, and to construct opera on the basis of "absolute" musical forms.[17] Such forms could not be simply transferred to opera but had to be dramatic themselves, and, further, formally determined by the content of the opera. Weill too, wanted music to play a more vital role in the conceptualisation of the total work; but both the musical material and its substance and organization, and the dramatic-musical association, are conceived in terms radically different from those of Schoenberg. Their argument about music and text is fundamental to an understanding of their different practice.

The source of the difficulty is, for Schoenberg, very basic: he finds the Brechtian theory of how music expresses and contributes to dramatic action "disconcerting" and "contradictory".

"How is one expected to reconcile such seemingly contradictory statements as "asserts the text" and "the music serves"? Assuming that the remaining lines are meant to suggest the various ways in which music "serves" in the "dramatic" opera (heightening the text, asserting it, etc.) how then is it to render an attitude, take a position and mediate at the same time in its "epic" counterpart, "since he who mediates cannot possibly take a position of his **own** but instead must take his place between two each of whom **insists** on a different position?"[18]

Schoenberg's natural predisposition that the composer **must** "take a position of his own" is neither purely "expressive" nor "formal" but derives from his sense that these aspects are unified in the individual work. For him it is not the **music** that mediates but the composer, who, "sparked by the text", conceives the work "unilaterally".[19] Schoenberg's reflections on Brecht's **Mahagonny** text culminate with the following comments, whose frustrated ambivalence concludes with a characteristically urbane gesture of resigned anti-modernism:

"In this context it must be said first of all that Brecht's viewpoint implies not only that music **expresses** "something" but that it expresses something **concrete**.
Thus — and that would be an interesting result of the struggle against romanticism, against expressive music — he has definitely **expressive music** in mind.
Except that he insists it express "something else".
But that creates the following situation:
In the past the author of the text intended his text to produce a sentimental or whatever effect, and a composer was obliged to compose so as to obtain such a sentimental or whatever effect.
But now we have a poet who — and that is where the knot becomes hopelessly entangled — looks to music to express that which the poet meant but did not say, or perhaps, also, what he actually said but did not really mean. — the main thing is: that text and music stand in their contradictory relationship. This is

the way it is, I suppose, and that is certainly the impression one gains: messrs. Brecht and followers do not want to be taken seriously, which is something that would not have occurred to me in the first place. If that is not "vieux jeu," Saint Offenbach, Saint Nestroy, Saint Johann Strauss, librettists all the way down to Knepler (the "poet" and thinker who gives Lehar his wings), then it can only be modern."[20]

Either this is deliberate obfuscation, or an encounter with something directly incompatible with Schoenberg's own mode of thought. It seems evident that his sensitivity derives from protective feelings about specific principles of musical form, as much as from an explicit contention over the social aspects of musical production.

Schoenberg's references to his audience are frequent enough to indicate a deep and ambivalent preoccupation with his relations with his listeners. It is a subject returned to again and again; but one need go no farther than the title of an autobiographical essay on the development of his music: "How One Becomes Lonely": written in 1937.[21] The degree to which he discusses details of his expressive style and method in relation to the history of the reception of his work is a revelation of how acutely conscious he was of his reception throughout his career. In other words his isolation was a function of reluctant imperative to him, not of apathetic disregard. The most concise comment can be made by comparing the following passages:

"...One of the accusations directed at me maintained that I composed only for my private satisfaction. And this was to become true, but in a different manner from that which was meant. While composing for me had been a pleasure, now it became a duty. I knew I had to fulfill a task: I had to express what was necessary to be expressed and I knew I had the duty of developing my ideas for the sake of progress in music, whether I liked it or not: but I also had to realize that the great majority of the public did not like it."[22]

"The invasion of methods and techniques borrowed from the commercial world in connection with the commercialization of the work of art...coincides with the glorification of the artist and of his quasi-prophetic mission, and with the systematic attempt to separate the intellectual and his universe from the everyday world, if only by sartorial extravagance. This is parallelled by the artist's declared intention of refusing to recognize any but the ideal reader, who must be an **alter ego**, that is, another intellectual, present or future, able to assume in his creation or comprehension of works of art the same truly intellectual vocation which characterizes the autonomous intellectual as one who recognizes only intellectual legitimacy. 'That is beautiful which corresponds to an inner necessity', Kandinsky said. The declaration of the autonomy of the creative intention leads to a morality of conviction which tends to judge works of art by the purity of the artist's intention and which can end in a kind of terrorism of taste when the artist, in the name of his conviction, demands unconditional recognition of his work. So from this point on, the ambition for autonomy appears as the specific tendency of the intelligentsia. The exclusion of the public and the declared refusal to meet popular demand which encourages the cult of form for itself, of art for art's sake — an unprecedented accentuation of the most specific and irreducible aspect of the act of creation, and thus a statement of the specificity and irreducibility of the creator — are accompanied by the contraction and intensification of the relations between members of the artistic society."[23]

Ringer proposes that "the crux of the matter for Schoenberg was the contention that music should always be understood as soon as it is heard."[24] The recurrence of this issue in Schoenberg's own writing is instructive, but potentially misleading, precisely because it seems such a self-evident point of difference. Conventional form had become seriously problematic in musical expression. Each work then depended on creative decisions forced into the intentional sphere. The musical or linguistic context shared by composers could offer little help, as the effectiveness of traditional concepts of meaning and organization of musical material had been thoroughly challenged.

It was not only the classical formal structure, the sonata, that had been creatively negated, but its underlying principle: the rational incorporation of extemporaneous elements, whose triumphant reuniting of underlying antimonies is characterized by Solomon as the primary achievement of the sonata form.[25]

"The decisive factor is not contrast but containment. The sonata distinguished itself from all other fantasy forms by its containment of its own fantasy-content, its molding of the improvisational, its suppression of the extemporaneous, its rationalization of the irrational. It was with this development that the sonata became a closed, rational, musical system, a "principle" of composition rather than just another musical form."[26]

The "utopian" element of the sonata-principle, for Solomon, is this re-affirmation of rationality in the retention of fantasy at a manifest but transcended level in the cyclical movements of the sonata form.[27] The degree to which this classical "system" structures a complex pattern of thematic and harmonic language "makes expression for the first time an element of the total structure", a structure which carries within itself "a complex set of presuppositions about melody, rhythm, and form, none of which can exist independently of the others."[28] With these patterns composers could utilize large sections of material which were quite conventional, almost written before them.

The formal scheme introduced dynamic contrast as an expressive principle, but also elevated the systematic or abstract structure of unifying form to a principle of contextualization based on the attachment to a "substantiality of the general" with its own spiritual principles.[29] The concept of form as "objectification of spirit"[30] accompanying this rationalization of structure certainly finds later adherence in Adorno's principle of form as "the conquering of the contradiction of essence and appearance."[30]

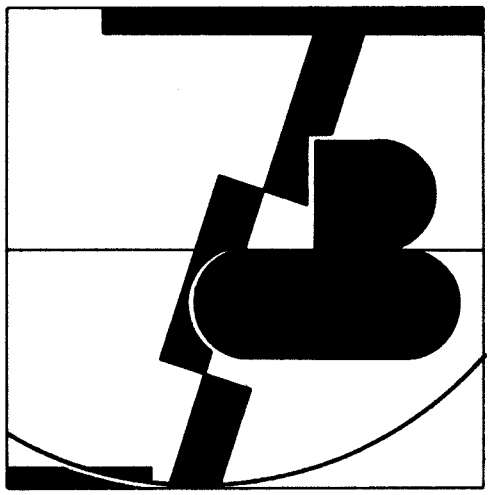
The principle of contrasting themes in the classical sonata form maintained its structural presence as a basic plan for the expressive evolution of thematic material in the Romantic period. With the expansion of the expressive dimensions, form based on contrast and development becomes "merely a shelter for the unfolding of melody, for harmonic and rhythmic excitement, and for the colorfulness of instrumental sound."[32]

In the late 1900's, aspects of compositional techniques which had been previously seen as a means to a purpose now shape the realization of the work. Stuckenschmidt has characterized the history of German-Austrian music as a proces of "accumulating thematic capital"[33] through which increased emphasis on the development section, in which the musical dialogue between themes had taken place, leads finally to the point where the contrast of themes is replaced by the polythematicism of the late romantics.

While the intensified emotionality or subjectivity of Romantic composers attempting to articulate their lyric independence from rationalism rendered the framework increasingly problematic, aspects of the traditional forms remained intact. Schemes of phrasing, harmonic modulation, rhythmic structure, and so forth were preserved as though they were laws of nature. The conventions of musical expression that were the crystallisation of centuries of standardized practice seemed fixed and immutable. . .The presentation of musical ideas was as thoroughly bound by these rules of construction as the words of a lyric poem are by rhythm and metre.[34]

The apparent concrete universality of such forms, and of their spiritual principles, inspired the allegiance of composers who simultaneously aimed for a more intensified subjectivity. Thematic modulation, and development became increasingly symbolic of the composer's own soul, and of the ability of his music to "lift experience into the sphere of the universally human"—and him to a transcendental position of godlike solitude from ordinary mortals.[35] The religious elevation of music to a position of privileged spirituality in Romantic thought led to a monumentalization of the emotional and technical power of the work and an increasingly arbitrary relationship between the conventions of musical form and the expression which accorded metaphysical or spiritual significance to individual works.

In this sense the Romantic maintenance of classic forms is not so much a continuation of classicism as an expression of sentiment for the classic. While the means of employment of classic forms differed widely, the Classical symphony of sonata form "remained before everyone's eyes as an ideal—never attainable but to be striven for anew."[36] The structural solidity of the tonal procedures was further and further stretched by expressive non-functional chromatic modulations. The introduction of literary symbolism to musical construction, Wagner's contribution to this growing opposition, was characteristic of the equivocally emancipatory Romantic tendency to preserve the framework of tonality and its structural conventions. The musical symbolism through which his poetic and dramatic intentions were achieved effected remote harmonic transformations which remained within a frame of extended tonality. Melodic inspirations and harmonic nuances thus used the formal structure as a reference point bearing little relation to the programmatic intentions which swelled the surface of the work. The increasingly equivocal relation between structure and style was not critical but inflationary. Schoenberg attributed the inflation of meaningful signification to the role of "extra-muscial" pressures superceding the controlling logic of formal requirements.



Schoenberg's critique of his own early works was that they had not achieved purely musical form drawn from the logic of the musical material but were themselves dependent on extra-musical poetic or dramatic materials, which he insisted on distinguishing from their musical articulation.[37] To rid the work of such "extra-musical" impulses was to restore the self-sufficiency of the work: of its construction of its meaning. Schoenberg's concept of form was firmly rooted in the nineteenth century belief in "an ideal set of proportions and shapes which transcended style and language"[38], this belief encouraged in Schoenberg a suppression of some of his own expressive characteristics in the drive to reinstate the force of "the symmetrical organization of the grammar of tonality".[39] Serialism then was his attempt to restore the expressive properties lost through "degenerate psuedo-tonal properties"[40] and was itself expressive of his actual obsession with tonality, of his "struggle to preserve the energies of tonality" that he remarked admirably of Mahler.[41] His defense of absolute music, then, finally took precedence over his defence of musical truth.

A specific motivation for this program for the renewal of musical language was Schoenberg's objection to the debased or decorative function of expressive devices in late Romantic music. His own relation to the neo-Romantic tradition is ambiguous: he sought to maintain the autonomy and purity of music but at the same time to rescue music from decadent expressivity and the "creative" enhancement of listeners' excitement. Not the expressive intentions, but the ability of compositional techniques to allow direct expression of them, was found to be lacking. Rejecting the attitudinizing, Schoenberg revived the attitude: that music could assert its claim as the spiritual power of a transcendental world precisely by its systematic purification and intensification of language.

In discovering the inner contradiction between harmonic and formal structural conventions and the intensifying subjectivity or "freedom" of musical expression, Schoenberg embraced the synthesis of these as his mission. Philosophical historicism, rather than the social sympathies of many of his contemporaries, fueled the idealist elements of his thought. In this regard his early affinity with Kandinsky's idealization of the inner animating principles of expression must be placed in proper perspective. He sought to justify his solution to the Expressionist impasse through reference to an evolutionary conception of music history within which he placed himself by an act of will. The tension between this willing towards historical significance, and the difficulties in attempting to create historically significant styles based on an idealized vision of the past, surely forms part of the impulse of the works themselves. Schoenberg's determination was accompanied by an evident feeling of helplessness before tasks that were, like the Cabala, **written** by the history he so revered. Frequent references to technological evolution as a comparable force of inevitable material development suggest a submission of his own development to the imperatives of the generative power of musical language itself.[42] Not only the task as a whole but each of its elements must prove its own inner necessity: "the musical work appeared to him as a discourse which emerged with compelling consequence from the particular and individual quality of the material presented at the beginning, a discourse in which even the smallest detail carried in itself the necessity of its own existence..." [43]

Such realisation was of course not "technical" but derived initially from his own musical impulses, from the felt need to trace and make coherent the musical logic of his own intuitive expressivity.

The task which signified to him his helplessness was the total integration of form and expression into a new logic that was as necessary as the expression itself. This involved the liberation of melody from its subservience to tonality and all its conventions. The Romantic-Hegelian idea of melody as the voice of spiritual freedom sought to realize itself "through him" but then demanded a new "necessity" which could comply with and govern the new freedom. Schoenberg's tension in composing results then from the desire to fulfill expressionist melodic and harmonic impulses — and yet to establish these as logically necessary and coherent within an inviolably autonomous system.

Schoenberg's conception of style as the "outward representation of the inner 'idea' which is the essence or totality of that which is expressed in the work"[44] is born in Expressionism but departs from it with his recognition of the structural severance of style and idea, and subsequently with his metaphysical-bureaucratic solution. Meanwhile this concept is consistent with his approach to joining text and music "in a complementary relationship, thus creating a unity from which nothing can be subtracted."[45] The musical realisation of the text's underlying idea is based on "the discovery of meanings in music's own procedures and processes that can be shown to be analagous to what is preceived in the world of feeling and action".[46] In other words the relation is placed somewhere between translation and metaphor, the latter concept raising the same abiguities of interaction as the analogy between tonality and transport. The music is still called upon to legitimate itself in the wellsprings of pure musical logic.

The seeking for an organizing principle harrassed him throughout the atonal period; it may have been more honest, if less bearable: than the later triumph of structure, which was no less relentless. For Schoenberg the interaction with dramatic form did not solve the task, which was to make evident the conditions for the music's comprehension. As Rosen points out, this was growing more difficult because of the loss of a common language, to the point that in his music "the explicit reference to an exterior and relatively stable system of meaning has almost vanished."[47] If meaning was not to be manifested in a socially comprehensible musical language, this unfortunate necessity was not of his making. Schoenberg's extension of technical rationalisation in the service of traditional ideals dispensed altogether with the problem of the social context or reception of the work, but, as he was to argue, "in a different manner from that which was meant" by his critics.

Schumann wrote of his loneliness as an artist in 1838;[48] Schoenberg's essay "How One Becomes Lonely" was written almost precisely one hundred years later. The idealisation of the spiritual qualities of music and of its historically determined evolutionary progress did not originate with Schoenberg. Nor

did the concept of inexplicable inspiration shaping the content of the work, and the consequent dilemma wherein the exaltation of pure music generated increasing conflict between emotive power and the conventions of received form. These are all ideals of the Romantic shcool. Characteristically the responsibility for the synthesis of "form" and "content" was placed on the artistic, i.e. subjective capabilities of the genius. The cult of artistic originality generated complex artistic contradictions, and relativised conventions and values. Crumbling relations between the artist and his society testified to the antagonism between "eternal values" and the "banal resources of convention" which shattered the faith of the Romantics in the classic ideal.[49]

"Thus in the decisive twentieth century revolution of material, the "eradication of cliches and flourishes" and the tendentious loss of the capacity for communication are bound inseparably to one another. The idea of bourgeois music — to connect unlimited individuality with the collective continuity of effects (**Wirkungzusammenhang**) through the integrating power of the compositional subject — disintegrated in the most flagrant opposition between the isolated subject and general musical consciousness."[50]

This separates Schumann's epoch from that of Schoenberg. The ideal of a universal language of "revolutionary subjectivism"[51], which provided loneliness with a liberating visage, had in fact failed. Musical culture had been fragmented by a profusion of embellished egos whose retention of a common language was a sentimental shadow of lost unifying concepts. Yet Schoenberg viewed every visible manifestation of an "impure" common language with unqualified suspicion, for it could not aid in the obligatory emancipation of the artist from the power of the material and from its existing linguistic implications. His absolutist attempts to compose responsibly won more admiration from his "progressive" contemporaries than their work could hope to inspire in him. His impulses had the value of truth: their attempt to re-integrate the compositional means with what was to be portrayed held lasting effects on the structural possibilities of new technique which he himself attempted to administer away.

Weill discusses this in his own essay on new opera, written in 1926. Speaking of recent musical theatrical works as expressive of the shared "realization that people must withdraw as much as possible from the sphere of influence of Richard Wagner", [52] Weill describes Strauss' decisive influence in pre-war Germany, but describes a general movement away from opera in the generation immediately preceding his own:

"An energetic purification process initially eliminated all extra-musical influences, especially the literary points of congruence. Absolute music became the goal of young composers. Complete renunciation of any external or inner "program", intentional avoidance of large orchestral forces, limitation of the means of expression in favor of an intensificaion of the inner powers of expression..." [53]

Such composers recovered sufficiently from their reaction against music drama to notice that "absolute music was directly in a position to pave the way for genuine opera."[54] Weill proceeds to a comparison of two subsequent works as "the most significant and typical representatives of contrasting views": Berg's **Wozzeck**, a "grandiose conclusion" to the development from Wagner, Strauss, and Schoenberg, and a "masterpiece of the strongest power"; and Busoni's **Doctor Faust**, which he proposes as a starting point for new opera.[55] The claim for Busoni's superior animating power rests on his work's successful fusion of musical and theatrical impulses; its "intensification of this union of stage and music" rather than the "piling up of theatrical effects" is more appropriate to the agreement between operatic content and musical form.[56]

Weill later elaborated this position in connection with his own work. Writing on changes in contemporary composition, he makes the following observation:

"Recently the development of music has been predominantly an aesthetic one: liberation from the nineteenth century; struggle against extra-musical influences (program music, symbolism, realism); return to absolute music; achievement of a new means of expression (enrichment of harmony, production of a new linearity) or extension of the old...those were the ideas that claimed the attention of the musician. Today we are a step further. A clear separation is reaching its completion between those musicians who, filled with disdain for the audience, continue to work toward the solution of aesthetic problems as if behind closed doors and those who take up an association with any audience whatsoever, who classify their creations in some larger movement because they realize that, beyond the artistic, there is a general human consciousness that springs from a social feeling of some kind and that this must determine the formation of an art work."[57]

Thus Weill characterizes the eruptive force in German music as a "departure from individualistic artistic principles", extending his own aesthetic principles — clarity, precision, simplicity — beyond the historical reference to dramatic principles of opera to their social ramifications. The preference for Brecht over Berg is not for him an "aesthetic" judgement, but a rejection of the excessive consideration of individual stylistic principles in favour of a communally oriented program of collaboration between the arts.[58]

Weill's subsequent program for opera is based on a conscious appropriation of sociological considerations into aesthetic thought. Like Schoenberg he rejected the superficial renewal of stylistic effects in opera in the twenties, and objected to "severe concessions to public taste" facilitating its popularization.[59] However for Weill this did not negate the social importance of the artistic work. Commercial capitulation was not seen as socially "useful" in any case, since he felt that the attraction of a wider audience was valid only if the artistic and social substance of the work was itself "useful" to a general public. Weill wanted to **change** this actual public; Schoenberg, a philosopher, to write for one which was yet to come into being beyond a small group of individuals among whom chance sometimes included a porter or driver.[60]

Weill then was not afraid to employ strophic and tonal forms, since he could use more developed harmonic language to comment on and transform those forms. His fear of the banal was not as strong as his fear of the socially irrelevant, though he too equated banality with the wrong kind of social relevance. However for him the musical development depended on the development of the musical audience. This program reinforced his predisposition for forms that were musically and socially intelligible, which were visibly related to existing musical comprehension yet also visibly not fettered by it.

The clear, direct but complex contours of Brecht's dramatic poetry allowed Weill a new freedom from musical illustration or psychological depiction, enabling him to explore dramatic qualities in the music itself. Since each musical section was formally self-enclosed, the music could accomplish its own investigations of the dramatic situation, while the abrupt **relation** between music and dramatic action generated formal and substantive meaning in relation to the content of the work as a whole. Weill maintained some historic precedent for his use of Song as a socially characteristic "Gestus", or "translation of dramatic emotion and individual characterization into a typical, reproducible physical realization.[61] This he found in classic opera, in Bach, Mozart, Offenbach and Bizet. His work with tunes resembles the "theme and variations" of Bach or Mozart rather than the longer fantasia-like improvisations whereby the listener is born away on a cloud of rhapsodic introversion secured by the underlying possession of continuous form. The self-enclosed but related episodes in the theme with variations often began with a simple popular melody and gradually transformed and embellished it through episodic treatments according to contemporary standards of harmonic and contrapuntal conventions. This fitted Weill's approach to dramatic music. The music itself had to be fundamentally dramatic, had to bear the "tempo of the stage" in its own rhythms, so that opera by Schumann, Bruckner or Brahms was for him simply unimaginable.[62] Mozart's music, as Weill was fond of pointing out, was dramatic in its very nature, whether or not it was written for the stage. Two characteristics offer themselves as relevant to this depiction: Mozart's willingness to play with, exaggerate, identify with or expose familiar musical conventions as a commenentary on the attitude of the actor; and his consequent ability to separate the awareness of the individual actor from the audience, to wink, so to speak, at the audience through musical commentary. Of course Wagner's recurring leitmotifs also articulate an awareness independent of the character; but his music serves as a psychological heightening for an audience involved with the immanent fate of the character, rather than conducting **within itself** a discourse between character, composer, and audience through its treatment of meaningful musical material. In Weill's music the functioning of artistic rules is openly subjected to playful operations by the artist — not as a function of the musical structure's internal generative principles but as a dramatic comment or encounter within the music itself related to the

dynamics of the dramatic situation. The specific artistic qualities of his work do not appear to be an attribute of their formal properties, but result from the transformation of "raw materials provided by other literary works, ordinary language, and so on."[63] Meaning is not the product of the "relationship of sign to sign within a closed system" but is understood as the result of the functioning of a particular set of relationships between speaker and listener, and is subject to perpetual modifications which lie outside the internal unity of form and meaning posed by a structuralist formalism.[64] Emphasizing the social meaning in the formal or artistic relationships within the work, Weill's treatment of popular forms thus distinguished itself quite consciously from contemporary **Gebrauchsmusik** and other "relevant" musical experimentation.[65]

The popularization of **Zeitoper** was seen by Weill as simultaneous with its superficial incorporation of trendy or topical materials.[66] In this respect his views are directly analogous to Eisler and Adorno's critique of the popular amalgamation of Wagner's symbolic leitmotif in neo-Romantic dramatic and symphonic music: the meaningless absorption of such materials is directed towards "reaching the consumer as effectively as possible. Manipulated art is consumer art."[67] Abstracted artistic appropriation parallels social appropriation, or more specifically, makes it possible. The film's integration of technical elements, for Eisler, also displays a dual quality, in that it parallels the social tendency "to amalgamation of traditional cultural values that have become commodities."[68] Weill is exposing a similar ambiguity in Zeitoper's incorporation of topical issues or techniques.

Brecht too criticized such "reforms" for continuing the subordination of philosophy to the "culinary principle" and for the "progressive" but meaningless introduction of new materials out of a desperate attempt to supply art with relevance.[69] In this regard, Brecht and Weill's operas were motivated not by a desire to be eclectically relevant, or popularly representative of new opera, but as an artistic attack on the main tenets of its current growth. Both **The Threepenny Opera** and **Mahagonny** are created as critical commentaries on what is portrayed. Their aesthetic and structural principles are derived from this purpose. As Drew has pointed out, the consequently disruptive and explosive qualities of the music were admired by Adorno, who was then faced with the quandary of justifying his admiration for music "which does not draw the musical consequences from the present situation, but attempts to operate through the transformation of the old worn-out material."[70] It was impossible for Adorno, no less than for Schoenberg, to "hear" what was going on in this transformation or to decipher its implications. The aesthetic justifications for Weill's work could not be provided in purely musical terms, but required a clever reversal of the Schoenbergian standpoint "so that the 'bad' features denounced by Schoenberg could appear to be 'good' in relation to extra-musical and anti-aesthetic functions which Schoenberg had never dreamed of."[71] Weill's music in these operas proclaims itself as a musical enactment of social contradictions; its focus on ambiguities of structure and expression is an assault not only on "the schizoid aspects in Busoni's classicism and Kaiser's Expressionism"[72] but also, more poignantly, on the security of formal expectations and the orthodox thinking of aesthetic systems.[73] Thus Weils music also asserts the relevance of new structural possibilities of autonomous music liberated from conventional constraints, to the social and cultural needs of a society deeply divided against itself.

Weill's increased concern with social issues did not radically alter his aesthetic commitments, but rather reinforced and recontextualized them. His essays from the late twenties, during his collaboration with Brecht, emphasise the sphere of musical production (Brecht's "apparatus")[74], attacking the isolated enclosure and diminishing social viability of the "socially-exclusive arts, originating from a different era and from a different artistic attitude".[75] Their collaborative resolution was the evolution of the "epic" form, based on narrative sequences of independent, formally unified episodes. The isolation of "Songs" solved both musical and dramatic problems, accomplishing the goals of independent musical construction and an anti-realistic, anti-psychological dramatic effect.

Weill's politicized approach to musical materials does not revoke the social language capabilities of musical forms but rather turns attention to them, reworks them, artistically transforms them so as not to appear as "natural" but as the representation of human expression in an alienated or distorted situation. The means of transformation is his own melodic and harmonic vocabulary, a point emphasized by Kowalke to rescue Weill from the charge of imitation directed at the prevalent European susceptibility to the jazz influence.[76] Weill's use of popular musical idioms is never a "wholesale borrowing" but a transformation of "rhythmic, formal, and orchestral characteristics of modern dance music without yielding to the temptation to borrow specific or harmonic formulas."[77] Weill's exploration of the idiomatic connotations of dance music has a dual character. Its emphasis on the collective voice of popular music challenges the cult of artistic originality but at the same time attempts to make the specifically artistic or poetical function of the devices apparent. This is most evident in the works written with Brecht, who was working on developing his theory of artistic **Verfremdung**, or estrangement, as a politicized response to the current Russian concept of **ostranemie**, or de-familiarization.[78] Brecht emphasized that dramatic estrangement could be accomplished only with the aid of music; his aim was not to renew opera, as Weill's was, but, in the case of **Mahagonny**, to "pay conscious tribute" to the senselessness of the operatic form."[79] This was to be achieved by representing Romanticism "only as content, not as form."[80] This was to be achieved by representing His intention was to raise opera to the technical level of modern theatre through the **radical separation of the elements**[81] by means of which the spectator was to be liberated from the intoxicating effects of the performance. Brecht's insistence on restoring philosophical significance to opera (in opposition to the domination of the "culinary principle") thus cohered with Weill's attempt to restore the predominance of absolute music, possessing a dramatic impetus, to the creation of new opera. For Weill this meant a thorough renunciation of Wagner, as we have seen; Brecht's formulation of this goal is characteristically harsh. "The original Wagnerites posited a sense (of opera **qua** opera) of which they were presumably aware. Those composers who stem from Wagner still insist on posing as philosophers."[82] To him this pose serves only the purpose of sensual satisfaction; his critique of this aspect of entertainment reaches its culmination with the substance of **Mahogonny**, whose theme is "the cooking process itself".[83]

In **Mahagonny**, the opera's "epic" quality is realized in its juxtaposition of dialogue, songs, Recitative, dance rhythms, and frequent new self-enclosed rhythmic or harmonic events arising suddenly as contrast to and commentary on preceding moments. Each musical section is stylistically evocative, frequently at a number of levels at once. Characteristic is the superimposition (not integration) of easily identifiable dance rhythms which were currently popular, a foxtrot, Tango, or other commonly appreciated style, with a complex of individual vocal or musical nuances drived from Weill's idiosyncratic harmonization and instrumentation. The significating capacities are gained through the interaction of musical layers with each other and with the action or text of the drama. Through formal contextualisation — the confrontation of musical episodes with each other — thematical material gains dramatic and social contextualisation. Musical expression is thus made "relative": each section contains a formal unity, but its expressive meaning is not absorbed within itself but rather absorbs meaning from its overt relationship to other musical episodes. The problematic nature of such relationships presides over the musical structure of the work. There is no point to lamenting over the seductive simplicity by which the listener is drawn into enjoyment of a song when we realize that precisely where such songs are most inescapably enjoyable, their dramatic context makes enjoyment most problematic: one should feal uneasy where the music is most robust, absorbed where the music is most dispassionate. This is of course Brecht's fundamental dramatic principle, but is realized independently in the music itself, consistent with Weill's own precept that the music of opera should be simultaneously based on the construction of sections according to autonomous or "absolute" musical form, and that musical structure should be determined by the content of the drama.[84]

"But this entire Mahagonny exists only because everything is so evil, because no peace reigns and no harmoney and because there is nothing upon which one can rely.... Labour and toil you have everywhere but here we'll offer fun."[85]

To present entertainment as a concept it has to articulate itself as a presence. Hence, the opera **Mahagonny** is enjoyable; it proposes the enjoyment of self-irony and knowledgeable ambivalence in the audience, it seduces while it portrays seduction. The instrumentation is appropriate, boasting banjos, drily seductive woodwinds, intoxicating rhythms (which can become sinister, as when Jimmy discovers the laws of life) and the most intimately ironic harmonies. The music is not so gay as that of the **Threepenny Opera**; it also counterposes its sanguine knowledge of corruption with monumental piety, but its

savagery is new. The complex mixtures of musical styles has an ambitiousness that exposes the official impropriety of the attack. It is not simply non-psychological, or non-emotional, but deeply and feelingly analytical of sentiment and desire, and of what is around or behind the tangible expression of emotion. The crystallisation of this effect is seen in the pronounced concept of the "Song"; its polemical opposition to Lieder is both tuneful and slightly diabolical. The tragic tone here, as in the **Threepenny Opera**, is compelled by the recognition that anti-sentiment, as an emotion, may be no more relevant or effective than simple sentiment. However, the artist is still very much at work. The preoccupation with the sentimental has its own sardonic beauty. The audience is thereby drawn in, or perhaps incited, to a reflexive terrorism against the vapid consumption of sublimating pleasure. Anti-style becomes a style, just as in Romanticism, according to Adorno, "the negation of meaning is elevated to the level of meaning."[86]

If the approach to style was problematic for composers during the Weimar period, it was because behind the surface of the work fundamental changes in the meaning and status of the art work were felt to be articulating themselves. Again Adorno has immortalized this crisis, describing in apocalyptic terms the eroding potentiality of the self-contained work of art, and the challenge posed to the artist where his artistic intentions rise to confront him from outside of himself. The recognition of the objective materiality of artistic language had both liberating and destructive implications, a dialectical prospect not sufficiently understood by theologians of expressive freedom. The consequent alienation of the artist from artistic language presupposed a new dichotomy between musical materials and their appropriation in the actual process of composition, or what Stern has termed a growing division between material and procedure.[87] Schoenberg's contribution to this situation should not be seen as identical with his intentional response, as Eisler has attempted to prove in his argument for the utilization of atonal musical structures in the film and other "popular" musical forms.[88] Schoenberg's ability to create music that was an **enactment** of feeling rather than its **representation**, as Eisler argued, made atonal music uniquely appropriate to a non-illustrative musical language whose concise expression rendered conventional development or elaboration redundant. Its meaning, in other words, could achieve its necessary self-sufficiency precisely in the situation where self-sufficiency ceased to be the central preoccupation, though Schoenberg himself negated this possibility in his own turn towards the rational re-enclosure of artistic form. Where Schoenberg's method tended to evolve towards a purely speculative approach to elements of form within an indissoluble category of aesthetic production, Weill's was of a fundamentally more "practical" nature.

For Weill, musical material embraced everything that was available, and was to be both drawn from and adapted to the existing musical situation as a whole — that is, the concrete musical-cultural milieu formed a complex of meaning which was central to the interpretation and constitution of musical speech. Weill's success was then, of course, inseparable from the cultural context on which it was openly dependent. This dependency has led critics to deny any evolutionary artistic "consequence" of his work;[89] this is made easier since that cultural milieu, with its unparallelled interaction between the cultural "levels" of opera, cabaret, dance, and musical theatre, was destroyed after 1933. In our own present musical culture, it is difficult to see the effectiveness of productions of his work. **Mahagonny** cannot provoke a comparable reception when opera continues to reproduce itself in an environment far more isolated and exclusive even than that challenged by Weill in the 1920's.

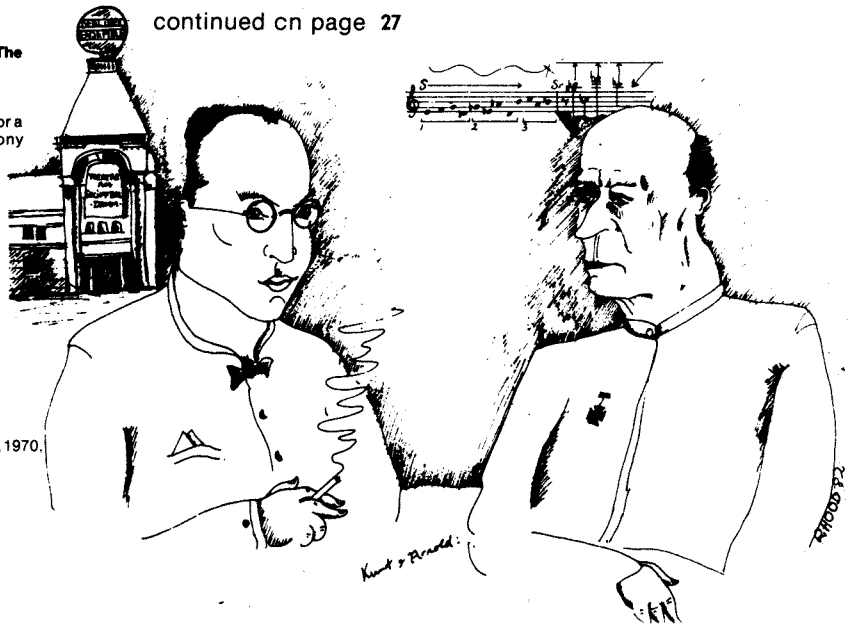
Schoenberg's influence is evident and incontrovertible. It is bolstered by an official critical and artistic avant-garde whose "mystification and classification of material is an objective authority of the art work.[90] The essential aimlessness of this interpretation finds philosophical justification in increasingly abstract claims for the progressive development of language. This appropriation, as well as the parallel rationalization of the "entertainment industry", explains why Eisler's elegant espousal of Schoenberg's adaptability has not produced the results he desired. Weill's influence depends however on the re-emergence of a social and artistic dialogue which can learn from Schoenberg where Schoenberg (and his successors) have not been able to learn from any amount of historical provocation. The recognition that such a challenge is fundamental to the movement beyond present fragmentation and categorization of artistic and social life would be an adquate "consequence" of Weill's artistic stance. That this "progress" is dependent on more than the technical advances of the most incontrovertible genius is an irrevocable fact of modern history which the most profound lament can not alter.

Notes

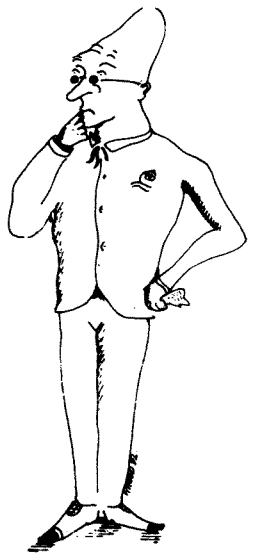
Complete publishing information is provided in the attached bibliography.

1. **Arnold Schoenberg, Style and Idea**, 1975, p.173; cf. John Willett, **Art and Politics in the Weimar Period**, p.161.
2. Alexander Ringer, "**Schoenberg, Weill, and Epic Theatre**"; 1980, p.82.
3. Theodor Adorno, **The Philosophy of Modern Music**, passim, cf. Boulez, ibid.
4. Pierre Bourdieu, "Intellectual Field and Creative Project", 1971, p.165.
5. Roger Sessions, "Music in Crisis: Some Notes on Recent Musical History", p.33.
6. ibid.
7. For a discussion of the cultural "habitus" see Bourdieu, op. cit. pp.182-184.
8. See Kowalke, **Kurt Weill in Europe**, 1979, concerning Weill's work as a radio critic; cf. also Willett, op. cit. p.163.
9. Ringer, op. cit. p.78.
10. Schoenberg, op. cit., p.337.
11. Alan Lessem, **Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg: The Critical Years, 1908-1922**, 1979, p.8, p.32.
12. See for instance Schoenberg, op. cit. p.339, and Ringer op. cit.
13. Schoenberg, op. cit. p.123.
14. Ben Brewster, "From Shklovsky to Brecht: A Reply", **Screen** 15: 2, 1974. For a fuller discussion of the critical debates of the Russian Formalists, see Tony Bennett, **Formalism and Marxism**, 1979.
15. Brewster, op. cit., cf. Willett, p.109.
16. Kowalke, op. cit. p.98.
17. ibid, and cf. Weill's essay "New Opera", reprinted in Kowalke, op. cit.
18. Ringer, op. cit. p.94.
20. quoted ibid. p.97.
21. Reprinted in **Style and Idea**, pp.30-53.
22. ibid. p.52-53.
23. Bourdieu, op. cit. p.165.
24. Ringer, 88; cf. Weill in Kowalke, p.513; Schoenberg, op. cit. p.99.
25. Maynard Solomon, "Beethoven, Sonata and Utopia", 1971, p.42.
26. ibid.
27. ibid, pp. 42-43.
28. Rosen, **Arnold Schoenberg**, 1975, pp.27-28.
29. Carl Dahlhaus, "Some Models of Unity in Musical Form", 1975, p.5.
30. In Lessem, op cit. p.7.
31. Friedrich Blume, **Classic and Romantic Music: A Comprehensive Survey**, 1970. p.66.
32. ibid. p.143.
33. Hans Stuckenschmidt, **Twentieth Century Music**, 1973, p.105.
34. ibid. p.30; cf. Blume, p.41 for a summary of these conventions.
35. Blume, op. cit. pp.54-55.
36. ibid. p.158.
37. Rosen, op. cit. p.86.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid, p.88.
40. Lessem, op. cit. p.29.
41. Schoenberg, op. cit. p.99-100, p.123.
42. Carl Dahlhaus, "Schoenberg and Schenker", 1974, p.215.
43. Lessem, op. cit. p.2.
45. ibid, p.163.
46. ibid.
47. Rosen, op. cit. p.20.
48. Friedrich Blume, **Classic and Romantic Music: A Comprehensive Survey**, 1970, p.11.

continued cn page 27



How to be a great[2] composer[1]
Take hold[3],[4] of a clear concept[5],[6]
and rigorously follow it through[7],[8],[9]
to its end.[10]



1. COMPOSER: A. We use composer here in the traditional sense of someone who creates music. We do not exclude improvisors from our definition, and the word composer, and all musical examples, might just as easily be substituted with artist, poet, choreographer, metalworker, wharfie, or any other profession along with appropriate examples from the corresponding field.

B: This article is primarily written for young Australian composers who, in my view, maybe getting good grounding in the how of composing, but not in the why.

2. GREAT: A. A great composer is one whose work shows a clear, recognizable profile and whose work breaks new ground in a significant way. As examples, I here cite four great composers, Charles Ives, Arnold Schoenberg, Harry Partch and Alvin Lucier. (And if three of my four examples happen to be American, I would beg the indulgence of the quailing nationalists among you -

i) That's where I grew up - the examples are familiar and available to me.
ii) Yeah, yeah! I know this whole thing will be dismissed by politicos as a) more individualist, romantic, anarchist ravings, and b) a clear example of rotten putrid, stinking capitalist ideologies in their final stages of decay. To which I can only say: Stiff.
iii) The principles of greatness respect no national boundaries or ideology. Any available examples would do.)

B: Many people have difficulty with the word 'great'. If it bothers you, substitute - Alive! Interesting! Vital! Consumed with Creative FIRE! Note also, that great need not be ponderous. Many of Ives pieces were light-hearted throwaways.

C: What we are talking about here are two games you can play as a composer: the immortality stakes and the survival stakes. The survival stakes will give you a car, a house, a family, security, commissions, prizes, performances, some fame, and comfort. In the immortality stakes, you may very well get all these things - but you may not- in fact, the immortality stakes renders all these irrelevant. To one playing the immortality stakes, the work is the thing, and it doesn't matter if they are noticed and paid, or ignored and unemployed. Whatever happens to them, it ultimately doesn't matter. Their work obsesses them, completely and totally. We talk here not about being comfortable, but about being immortal, WHICH MEANS having your work become a part of that living, constantly changing tradition - the line of great music-makers in world history.

3. TAKE HOLD: A. Confucius' Great Learning (is he back in fashion enough in China that I am allowed to quote him now, dear politicos?) begins:

> 'Know the point of rest, and then have an orderly mode of procedure. Having this orderly mode of procedure, one can grasp the azure, that is, take hold of a clear concept'.

In other words, you have to stop before you can start. Meditation, for all its current unfashionability, was one such way of stopping. Many people drew parallels between meditation and music because both involved the study of attention. You ever see a good performance that didn't involve concentration? Yours, as well as theirs - switch terms as necessary. And without resorting to mysticism of any sort: you're only going to be a good (forget great for the moment) composer if you take time to think and formulate ideas in / behind your music very clearly. Yes, you MUST (no two ways about it) consider the philosophical ideas behind what you write as much as the absolute music itself. Music without idea stinks. Every good tune that works has a definable principle - physical, psychological, emotional - an idea - behind it somewhere. Without the principle behind it, music is so much empty flailing of the air. I don't know how any young composer can seriously consider themselves educated now, in 1981, until they have read, grappled, and dealt with the ideas expressed in at least the following books:

Feruccio Busoni : Sketch towards a new aesthetic of music.
Charles Ives : Essays before a Sonata.
Claude Debussy : Monsieur Croche, the dilletante-hater.

Harry Partch : Genesis of a Music. (part one)
John Cage : Silence; A Year from Monday.
Kenneth Gaburo : The Beauty of Irrelevant Music.

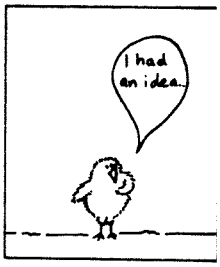
Some other personal choices would include:

Milton Babbitt : Who cares if you listen?
Trevor Wishart : SUN
Karlheinz Stockhausen : Texte (excerpts)
Steve Reich : Writings on Music.
Alvin Lucier : Chambers

The list could be extended greatly, and not just with writings from the field of so-called 'classical' music. The point is that all these people had ideas which animated their lives to such an extent that they were forced to do creative work.

4. TAKE HOLD: Ideas are bubbling around us all the time. The air swarms with them. You have to make yourself receptive and open, so you know they're there. You also have to know when to grab.

5. A CLEAR CONCEPT: i.e. One you're willing to die for. If you don't take music this seriously, please don't insult this article by reading any further. If you think, 'Well, there are limits.....', 'but think of the consequences.....', 'well, considering the circumstances' etc, just turn to the next article. I'm sure things will be nicer there.



6. A CLEAR CONCEPT: i.e. as in

Schoenberg - the tone row - a unifying principle for pitch replacing tonality.
Ives - the transcendentalist vision of all the world and its musics sounding simultaneously.
Partch - the expression of tuning and its physicality as extensions of the doctrines of truth.
Lucier - the exploration of the physical properties of sounding matter.

7. RIGOROUSLY: Schoenberg's development is studied in enough detail in the journals to allow us to pass over it here. Ives ditto. Partch started with a tuning concept, and ideas of physicality, which developed into a whole orchestra of home-made instruments, new tuning systems, new concepts of performance and new ideas of theatre. He trained people to play the instruments himself, devoting years to bringing pieces to performance level. Today, seven years after his death, despite enormous problems associated with the work, the ensemble somehow continues. There was a strength in those ideas that lasts.

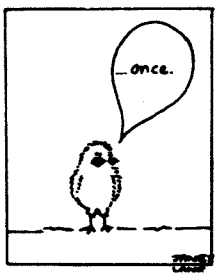
Lucier is not quite fifty. His works, starting from 'Music for a Solo Performer' (1965) to recent works like 'Music on a Long Thin Wire' (1978) show a real clarity and concision of thought (incidentally, they're also getting more and more beautiful) which he has pursued with a commendible singlemindedness. It will be very interesting to watch his work progress in the next twenty years or so, as he becomes a respected old master.

Notice that all these people pursued their vision throughout their whole creative lives. This wasn't a soft option - it was a lifetime contract.

8. RIGOROUSLY: Through all its implications, no matter where it may lead you.

A. It might even lead you out of music altogether! Ron Robboy and I, making an opera of 'Der Yiddisher Cowboy' eventually threw out music and made a semi-documentary, semi-comedy movie instead, because that's what the ideas demanded.

B. And forget about such things as 'good taste' or 'standards' which may only get in the way of where an idea wants to go.



i) If Beethoven had considered the 'standards of good taste' of his day when writing the 'Grosse Fuge', it wouldn't have been written. Greatness pushes out boundaries.
ii) Don't worry! Good taste will reappear when you need it. It won't go away just cause you're stretching it a bit.
iii) And as for 'having standards', there are two ways to be. One is negative, and not being concerned with 'inferior work'. This produces isolated individualists. More of these we don't need. The other way is to encourage people, even if not of the highest standard, by pointing out positive things in their work that do work. This will not only help you, but all those around you, and help those around you to (just maybe) develop into first rate talents. More of these we do need.

9. RIGOROUSLY: Have no thoughts, ever, of compromise. Compromise ultimately fails, becoming reformist bad taste.

A. This says NOTHING about popular acceptance. i.e. if your vision is foot stomping dance music, do it! But be utterly, ruthlessly honest about it.

B. Shostakovich paints a picture of Stalinist Russia where the only uncompromising person was a dead one. He survived by 'sneaking his message in'. We aren't in Stalinist Russia. The penalties for honesty are less severe here. You don't have to sneak.

C. 'But if we don't compromise, nobody will ever play it!' Well, screw professional musicians - who needs them? Make your own performers. Like Partch did. Like Lucier is doing. Start small, with two or three people. Develop skills gradually. Perform pieces written with those skills in mind. As time passes you will find your work growing. Furthermore, the kind of people you will attract, as both performers and audience, will more than likely be the right kind of people for your music, and not just some hard boiled professionals you've managed to be lucky enough to catch between rehearsals (and who probably don't like new music anyway).

D. 'But I have to support my family'. Well, so you do. But to a creatively obsessed person, somehow, always, the work comes first.

10. TO ITS END: To what end. Why do it? Why bother?

A. Chris Mann says 'You know why I like working in Australia? Cause its got the biggest attitude of 'so-fucking-what?' of any place I know. I mean, (on my farm), I could be slashing those hills for the next fifty years, and as long as I did, there would still be a farm. But if I die, and nobody continues, in two years you won't even be able to tell there was a farm there. And it's the same in the arts. So you're left with the reason - the only reason you do things down here - the only honest reason - is cause it's a good thing to do. Anything else, fame, recognition, etc, are just flukes. This place is good because it forces you into an absolutely ruthless grappling with why you do work'.

B. Not only cause it's a good thing to do, Christopher, but also

i) If you don't do it, nobody else will.

ii) If you have the FIRE, you have to, you must.

The only artists who are interesting and vital are those who are consumed by their work. If you're not willing to give it this level of involvement, you maybe famous, comfortable, and competent, but you won't be alive, active, probing and vital. You will be DULL. And no dullard was ever great.

A very personal postlude.

Getting down to the local level, we find very few great Australian composers. Why is this? Is it because

- they are afraid of a clear concept?
- they don't spend enough time formulating the philosophy, the why, of doing it?
- they don't have the rigor necessary to pursue an idea mercilessly to its end?
- no-one ever told them that in addition to competence and charm, they needed FIRE?

One of the stock answers is to blame society. Don't. Australia isn't conducive to fill-in-the-blank. But then, neither was Schoenberg's Vienna or Ives' New York conducive to fill-in-the-blank. And it's not just being out of the mainstream. Harry Partch lived in California for most of his life, well out of the New York - Paris mainstreams. But it turned out that he didn't need the mainstream. They needed him.

It appalls me that nearly all Australian composers over the age of forty (and quite a few under, by the way) don't question the social milieu they find themselves in. This blind, unquestioning faith that to write for orchestra, opera, string quartet, etc, is the noble, laudable, desirable, and God-ordained way to extend the history of music strikes me as pathetically naive. To be sure, professional musical media are one possible option. But surely in 1981, they form only about 1/3 of the whole picture.

One example of this misguided attitude is the ABC - Peter Stuyvesant Young Composers Competition.[1] Trying to revitalize the orchestra as a meaningful force in contemporary music is a good thing. So is encouraging young people to write for this revitalized medium. BUT -

A. Competitions only encourage mediocrity, jealousy, political infighting and bitchiness.

B. The pieces will not be given either a) adequate rehearsal time or b) sufficiently dedicated performances unless the situation of orchestras in Australia (most of whose members do not like contemporary music) changes radically.

C. It seems a terrible waste of time for every young composer in Australia to bat their brains out writing an orchestral piece on the off chance that theirs will be one of the three pieces selected to receive (an almost certainly inadequate) performance.

Is this contest about breeding showhorses, or is it about helping young people learn about the orchestra? If the latter, surely there are at least a dozen better ways of going about it than this

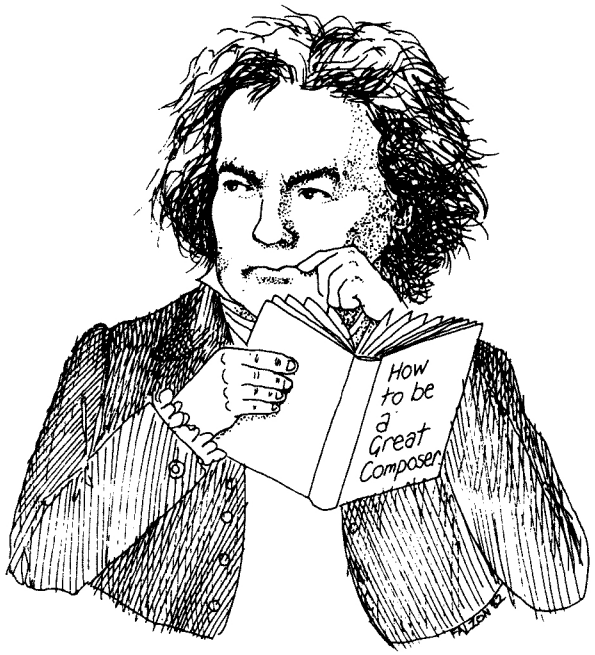
This contest is a half-hearted compromise designed to work within the realities of a bad situation by trying to 'improve things a little at a time'. Such reformism is doomed to fail, carrying within itself the seeds of its own destruction. As if an inadequate effort were better than no effort at all! For shame!

HOWEVER, I don't want to bitch or be petty. I must be positive and optimistic. For the time has never been riper for Australia to produce first-rate compositional talents. The new musical scene is in ferment. The amount of activity is astounding. In Melbourne alone last year, there were, on the average, two new music concerts a week. And the bulk of that was the produce of young local composers. There are, in this town, around fifty young composers actively working, producing and performing their own musics. (And a note on blindness: Clive O'Connell of the Age keeps writing about the 'desert of compositional activity' in Melbourne. Just because most of the new music activity happens outside established mainstream venues (which venues have never welcomed new music, anyway), he thinks there's nothing happening!)

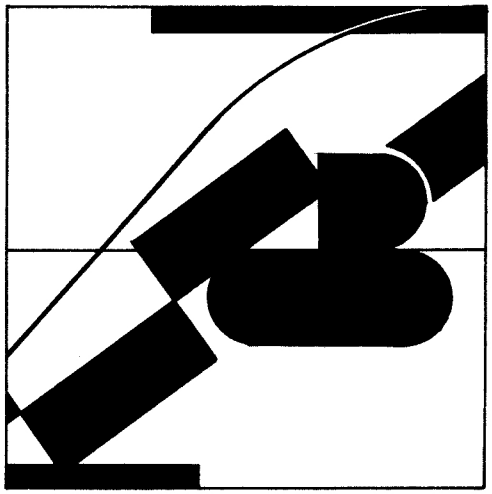
The quality of this music ranges from very, very good to very, very bad. Just like in the rest of the world. And stylistically, it covers the broadest range from strict academic formalism to experiments with new technologies to utterly spontaneous theatrical improvisations to the creation of new hybrids between 'pop' and 'art' musics. Just like in the rest of the world. No, Australia is not behind the times, nor is it isolated, nor is its product inferior. We really just stand on the edge of an explosion of our compositional talents. It is in the context of this current excitement that I issue this call for all those young musicians working so hard to go on from competence to greatness.

Feb 5, 1981
Warren Burt

1. *This article was written in February 1981 before this competition took place. In the light of the results of this competition, I see no reason to change any part of my article.*



Recordings and information on Warren Burt may be obtained from the composer: 3/121 Arnold St.
North Carlton
Vic 3054
Australia



NMATAPES

A special limited edition of one hundred cassette recordings is now available featuring computer music by Graeme Gerrard, David Hirst, and Brian Parish. Also included are piano works by John Jenkins and Alistair Riddell. Cost: $6.50.
Send cheque/money order to
NMA Publications
PO Box 1001
Brunswick 3056 Vic.

TONALITY: IS THE TONIC ON THE ROCKS?

Earlier this year the letter appearing below was sent to a broad section of Australian composers in the hope of gaining a diverse collection of statements regarding the issue of tonality.

It is clear, from the current activity, that the question of tonality is being raised in both national and international musical circles, indicating perhaps a wider resurgence of this mode of thought. Schoenberg himself left the question of a 'return' to tonality open, thereby equally admitting to such a possibility.

However the issue here is not so much that of a 'return' to tonality, as the question below hopefully makes clear, but rather a renewed consideration of the role tonality may take in a late 20th century framework. Unfortunately due to limitations of space it was impossible to include more than a brief statement from each contributor, and these statements should be understood in the light of this restriction. We nevertheless welcome continued discussions in these pages.

It remains to thank those contributors who took an interest in this project, and supplied us with their statements. Their co-operation is gratefully acknowledged.

I don't think I've ever even thought about tonality as a compositional force, let alone used it. My preferences lie in the fields of textural substance, timbral qualities and the work involved in assembling sound with other performance features. If there is a general movement toward tonality, that's OK by me, but I don't think I'll be joining it.

Ernie Althoff 29.3.82.

Historically it can be argued that the entire story of musical composition, particularly in Western Europe, is inextricably bound up with the search for ever more complex tonal relationships, and that despite the clangour in the earlier part of this century it has never really been abandoned.

What was unfortunate was that the dilemma faced by one particular composer (and I make no apology for being inflammatory here) should have been projected so effectively onto so many young composers of this century who had no reason to listen to any but their own muses.

The price to pay for ignoring such an influence was until recently ostracization, but mercifully that is now sufficiently distant to be seen as a historic rather than socio-artistico phenomena.

The fact of the matter remains that tonality has always been a convenient way of designing our need for some kind of orientation in order to recognize the 'sense' in a piece of music. If we cannot experience this orientation then we simply lose interest in the piece, and tonality (in whatever way the composer wishes to employ it) does this most efficiently.

Colin Brumby 17.3.82.

Consonance/dissonance; tonality/non-tonality are irrelevant when considered on their own. They only become meaningful when one asks: are the sounding means of a piece appropriate to the issues the composer wished to raise with that piece? Considering issues, we should deal with meaningful ones. Writing to please an audience is not an issue, it is the weakest kind of sloppy thinking.

Initiating changes in the deep structure of society seems not only like a meaningful issue, but perhaps the most urgent challenge facing us today. As such, any sonic material which advances us toward an understanding of this goal, whether consonant or dissonant, tonal or non-tonal, noised or pitched, will be useful, and hence, beautiful.

Warren Burt 18.2.82.

The chinese concepts of Yang and Yin are helpful in understanding the role of tonality. Tonality is essentially concerned with contracting, or drawing towards a centre (Yang); the rejection of tonality means expansion, dispersion without a home (Yin - Michio Kushi's usage). Chinese medicine distinguishes between diseases of dispersion, and diseases of contraction. There is thought to be disease when either force is in excess: balance is the condition of health. The diseases of our time in Australia are the diseases of dispersion, (loss of a centre, the movement towards republicanism), and social dispersion (the breakdown of the family). The need to adopt tonality as a compositional force in Australian music is thus the need felt to cure disease by restoring balance

Melvyn Cann 22.2.82

Certainly I think that strict Webernian serialism is breaking up, and not before time. This is not just an Australian phenomenon, of course. But I doubt very much that we are all tending towards a revival of 'tonality' in the 19th century sense. I hope not, anyway. A lot of my music in the past four or five years uses such a modified serialism that it could almost be called tonal - e.g. I deliberately use rows with intervals that encourage tonal suggestions, and I use vertical-

I hope you will excuse the form of this letter. I am currently preparing an article for the first issue of NMA magazine, concerning a general movement in Australian music toward the adoption of tonality as a compositional force.

Hence I am writing to you, and other composers of diverse aesthetic viewpoints, to ask if you would care to contribute your thoughts regarding this direction.

If you would care to send me a terse statement- ranging from a single sentence to perhaps a paragraph of 100 words or so- it would be published as received in an article which would constitute an overview of thoughts concerning tonality in a late 20th Century framework, particularly in the Australian situation.

I understand that the scope of such a statement would necessarily be limited, nevertheless I believe the question to be an important one, worthy of discussion in a public sphere. This is what I hope to achieve in publishing the statements I receive.

I hope you will consider the venture worthy of your support, and I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

ity (i.e. chord progressions) in a way that is traditionally irrelevant in a purely linear music. But I wouldn't call this tonal in any accepted sense of the word. I can only speak for myself, of course, but so far I haven't heard any new Australian music which I could unequivocally call tonal. Maybe you should have defined precisely what you understand by the term.

Tristram Cary 2.3.82

Do you feel tired, irritable, neurotic?
Want relief?
Reach for Tonality.
When only the category will do.
Currently on special -
2 for $1.99 (limit of four)
This week only at all Institutions around Australia.
WARNING: TONICIZING IS A HEALTH HAZARD:
Yours and everyones'

Alice Cohen 2.7.82

What is tonality? Is it a system of heirarchical ordering? If so, what is most important - the tonic pitch, the tonic functioning triad prefaced by its Dominant functioning triad in a cadential formula? Could the tonic be any sound event whose importance is defined however a composer chooses? Is tonality a system used for determining consonance or dissonance? Does it then imply a specific aesthetic, style or form? Has tonality always existed in some form? Has there ever been a movement away from it that has succeeded in actually moving away from it? If there is a general movement toward the adoption of tonality as a compositional force does this imply the imitation of music by composers in the 19th century? Regrettably, this is usually the case.

The so-called return to tonality is neither good nor bad per se. It is important to remember that tonality or any system for that matter will not by itself produce a masterpiece or even good music from an incompetent or mediocre composer.

Theodore Dollarhide 22.2.82

A few years ago I felt a strong urge to compose in a tonal idiom and began to do so quite quickly, with an almost complete lack of abashment.

I'm still not quite sure why, perhaps I was unconsciously reacting against the austerity and hermeticism of much of the music I'd written since about 1970, whose language had become refined to such an extent that the logical next step would appear to have been silence. Perhaps, also, my discovery that I was not alone reinforced my instinct to persevere in this direction.

With the composition of my instrumental sextet Laikan 1 in 1979, I found myself working with dance rhythms, melismatic cantilenas and simple, drone-based harmonies. Polyrhythms and diatonicism seem to have pervaded much of my most recent music: Another instrumental sextet; Maninya (1981) and the outer movements of the piano concerto I'm writing at the moment.

No doubt the new diatonic element in my work will eventually be rationalised: I'll understand its function and I'll know where it's leading. At present, however, I'm just letting it happen because it feels right. Certainly I'm enjoying composing more than I did a few years ago: a spirit of recklessness seems to have taken over and, as far as I'm concerned, this is both necessary and inevitable

Ross Edwards 5.3.82

The road to Doh is only for true believers - those born again or still in a state of innocence - but genuine conversions are rare. Claims that The Way is now found to be in tonal form should be seen in the light of what tonality offers: a comfortable reliance on triggered responses from a wide reference of past association, and the balm of a certain emotional world.

The tidy shapes of the tonal package with its sure sense of destiny, can only be faked by today's composers, other than a handful of practitioners who might be classed as a naif group for whom salvation is probably attainable.

For composers whose lives spanned the mid-twentieth century Age of Enlightenment, tonality was allowable in their first fantasies, and perhaps in the final Apocalypse in A: that is, acceptable in the pure in heart and the simple in mind

As always in art, justification matters little. Composers will use what they need.

Helen Gifford 14.3.82

'Tonal oder Atonal?' My answer, like Schoenberg's: neither - the question is wrong. I am content to leave the question of deciding whether tonality is an appropriate road for late twentieth century Australian composition to those who think it is important to decide whether tonality is an appropriate road for late twentieth century Australian composition

Graham Hair 19.3.82

In Western cultures, at least, we, as children, rapidly develop through tonal conditioning. It establishes itself, therefore, as a fundamental reference. Composers in Australia, as elsewhere, in making strong attempts to develop alternative 'forces' have succeeded in bringing about a more flexible usage of tonality and a greater acceptance of diverse musical statements. Tonality remained alive, however, and even extreme innovaters still tend to look over the shoulder. So What! We need varying degrees of tension, colour, light and shade, and to therefore pull with varying degrees of intensity against the gravitational pull of tonality. Some like flying high, other low. Remember, though, that low flying can sometimes be more hazardous because it's closer to the ground.

Don Kay 18.3. 82

'Tonality' as a term has specific pre-twentieth century connotations which bear little or no relation to the structural usage of 'tonality' which composers (not only Australian) are now adopting. In my opinion, this redundant term is being bandied about by self indulgent composers, seeking media limelight and sensationalism. In an article such as this, tonality could perhaps be redefined as 'Tone Centralisation' or some other more descriptive and less confusing term.

Michael Lonsdale 24.3.82

Re 'Tonality' -
Is it
- a real debate that matters?
- a real matter for debate?
- a debate for real matter?
- a matter for real debate?
- a debatibul(sic) matter for reality?
- a matterful reality for debate?
- a reality for debatiful matter?
- etc. ?

And where is the tonality in the above?

Ron Nagorcka 24.3.82

On tonality:
La, not atonal!

Ned Oden 28.3.82

The return to tonality by many composers, either in full, or as yet another resource, shows that it's compositional potential is far from exhausted. The re-adoption of tonality does not necessarily imply re-vitalization of the attendant forms and systems of organization formerly used to shape it, so that we are not talking about a neo-neo-classicism, though this maybe so in particular cases. For some it may constitute a convenient or fashionable point of repose, for others, an indication of deeper insecurity in the face of a multiplicity of compositional possibilities and the need to consolidate with an historical link from the past, for others still, a recognition that attributes of tonality are relevant to the pluralist context of the post avant-garde.

Trevor Pearce 2.7.82

For me, the general movement in Australian music towards the adoption of tonality as a compositional force can only be understood by viewing it in a quasi-historical sense.

Given the ocean of non-tonal music written since World War 2 and the super saturation of dissonance- so much so that one could say by the '70's non-tonal music became the norm and the 'norm' (tonal oriented music) became viewed under that auspicious term avant-garde - the questions that arise are how much of the swing to tonally-oriented music on the Australian scene is the result of evolution (or regressive evolution), how much of the 'Need' for change was brought about by peer group pressure - through critics and the like- 'hailing' the triumphant return of tonality, and how much by overseas influence?

More to the point, was it a case of the chicken before the egg.....?

Mark Pollard 15.5.82

There seems to me no reason why composers cannot use tonality along with other types of pitch organisation, if the context of the composition requires it. Perhaps it depends on the ability to use tonality without direct parallels to the past, if, of course, there is a desire to avoid eclecticism or even plagiarism. In my particular case, it has certain favourable characteristics;

1. It is a well-known and understood method.
2. The instrument is suited to it.
3. Its use in extremely complex works (i.e. temporally and in the quantity of notes) provides a means for the listener to appreciate the other characteristics and forces at work in the composition.

Since I have the means by which to use and manipulate tonality, on the piano, in ways that have never been used before, it seems logical to do so.

Alistair Riddell 3.6.82

Having plundered the rest of the World's music for such a long time, it is hardly suprising that the Western composer is looking around for something else to put his name to. Composers as a species are extinct, but they linger on - after all they still have power, privelege, and position (just look at the working of the Music Board's Grants booklet if you don't believe me) even if they have nothing to say musically. Composers have always felt the need to justify themselves (hence all the long raves at the beginning of scores) - so now it's 'How do we justify our existence, how do we get people interested in us like the good old days? Let's get back into showbiz. Well we've done all that pulse stuff till everyone is bored out of their brain - what else can we revive and repackage? Of course! Remember that artificial system we decided on a few centuries ago - gee, it really caught on, didn't it? If anyone asks us, we can say that we are trying to 'communicate' again.

Tonality? I don't know how any creative musician can take it seriously.

Jon Rose 18.4.82

Two Piano Pieces

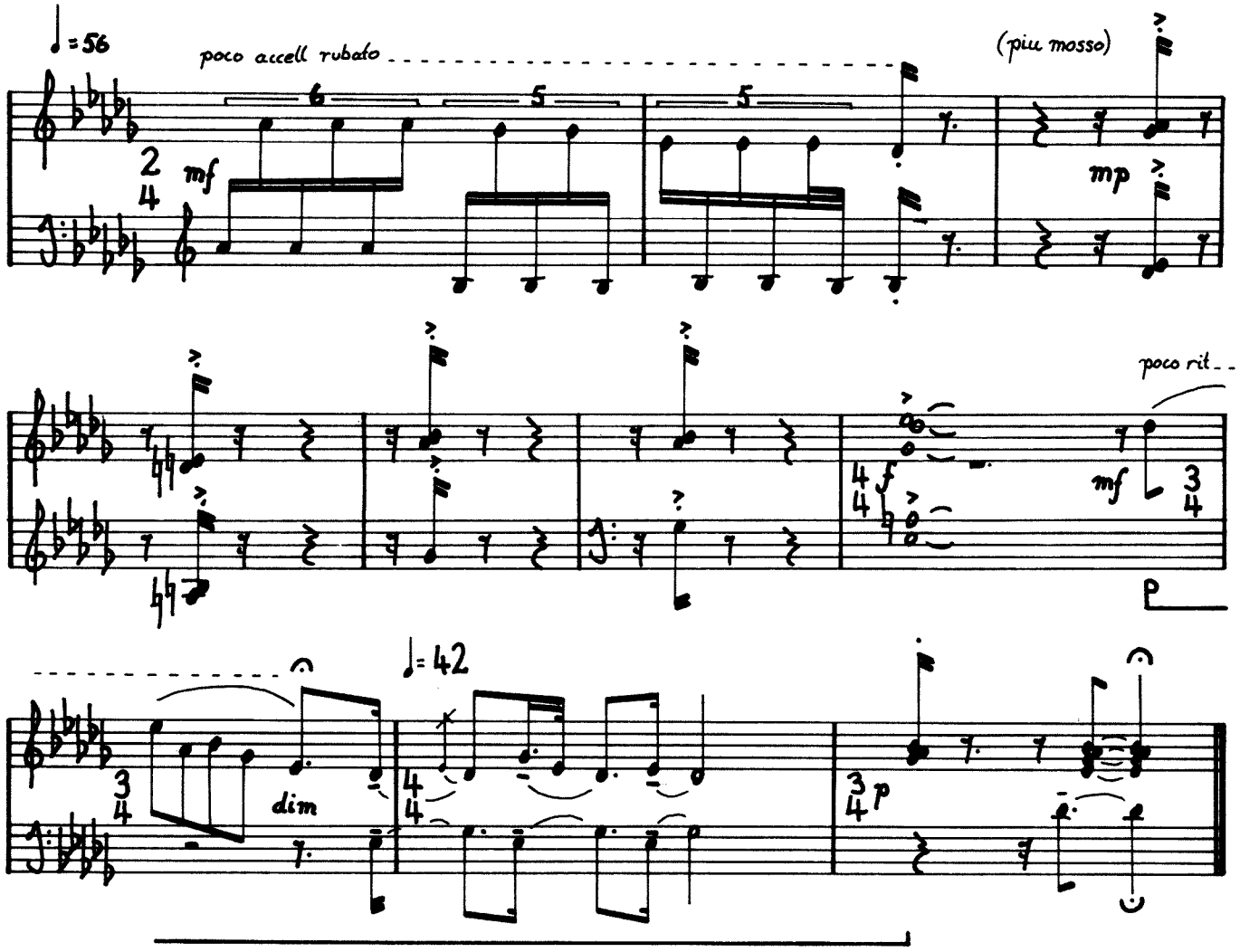
John Jenkins

New Music Articles

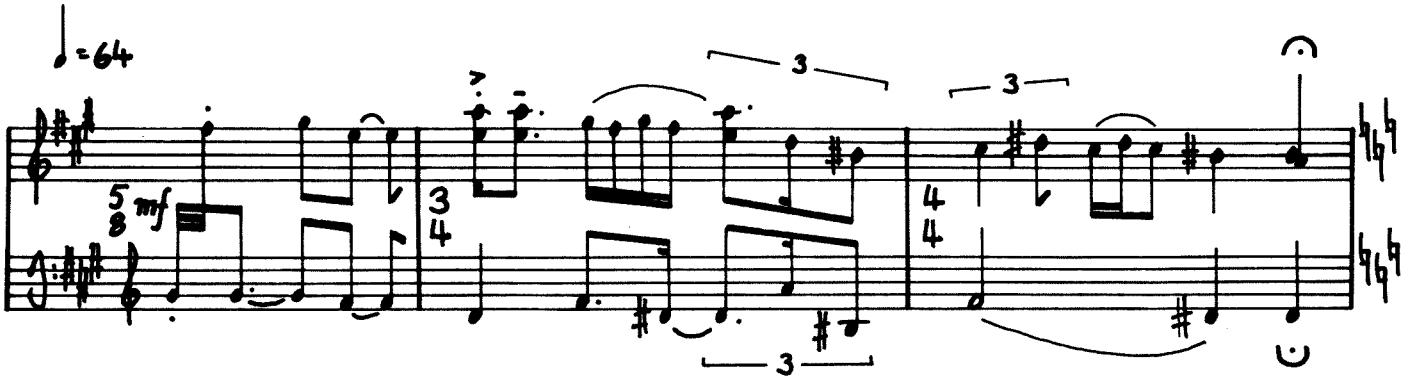
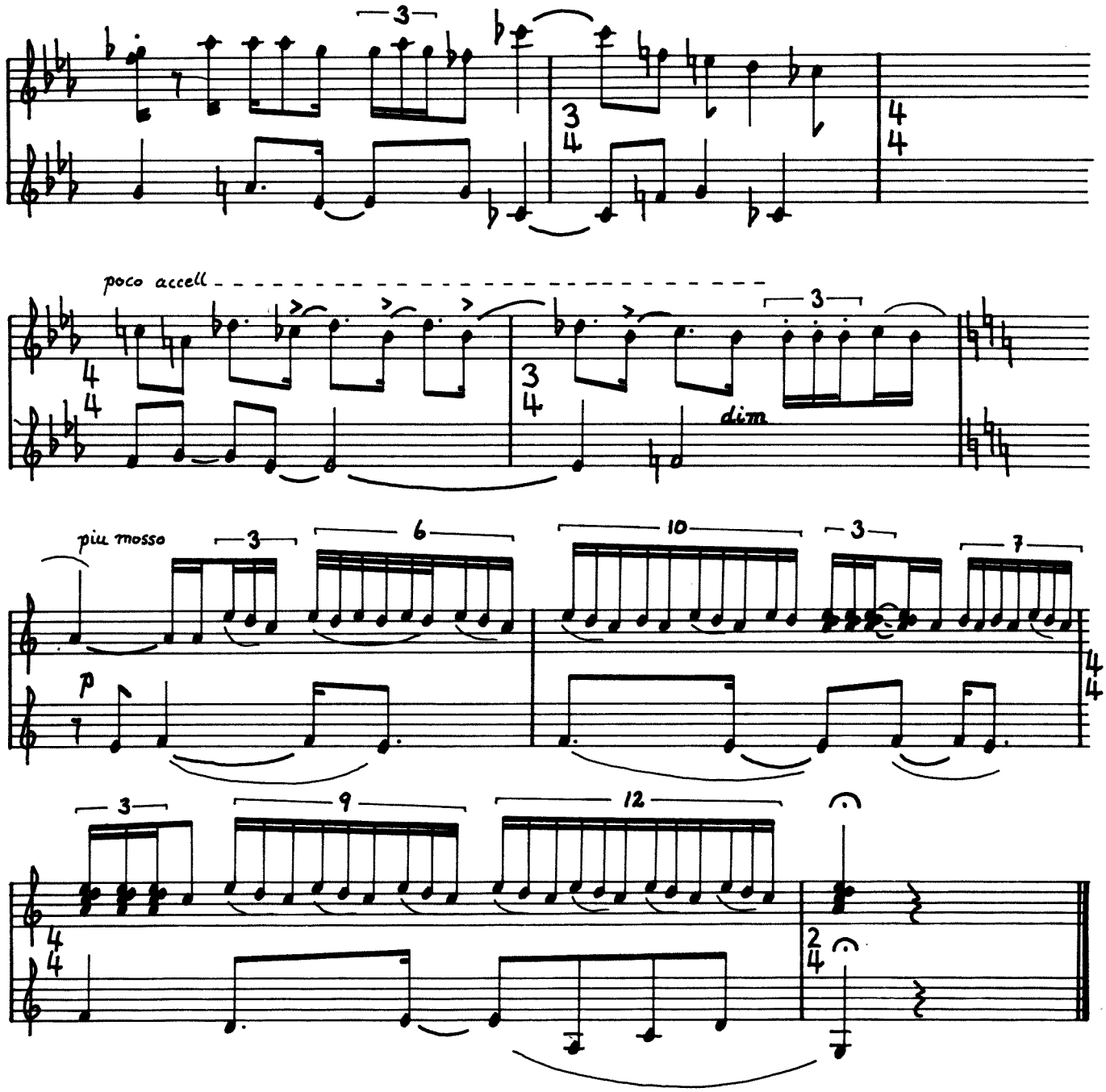
TWO PIANO PIECES

John Jenkins

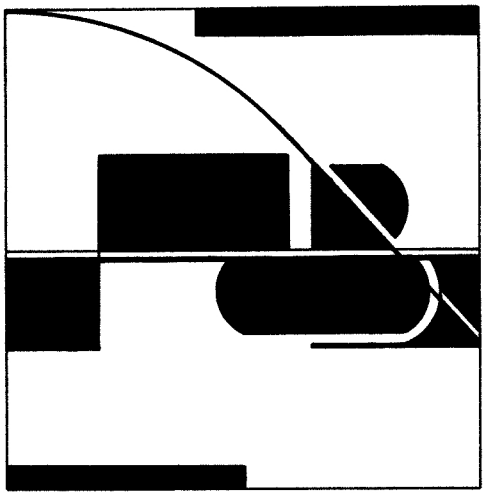
I



II



copyright © 1982 NMA Publications.



Every work that I have ever written is tonal, in the sense that each piece progresses from one centre of gravity to another. Before writing a work, I do, in fact, plan the gravitational centres; and, of these, the tone 'E' has always been the Apart from some twentieth century composers in the Western tradition, all the music of man, whatever his race or creed, possesses tonality in the above sense. To turn one's back on what appears to be fundamental to music has always seemed to me to be rather foolish.

Peter Schulthorpe 29.3.82

Whatever possessed a relatively small but loud group of mainly German, Italian and French composers to explore the musical potentials of atonality in the first half, more or less, of this century, in their enviroment, does not necessarily compel Australian composers, living today in a different enviroment, to do the same. Education and technology have made available the musics of the world, and what materials a composer uses depends on his or her expressive ends and on what his or her conscience will allow.

Paul Turner 24.2.82

It's like the length of womens' dresses: the mini skirt shocked, briefly, then became acceptable; the maxi skirt, like some of the stockings it concealed, had a run; knee-length remained popular. Now any length will do.

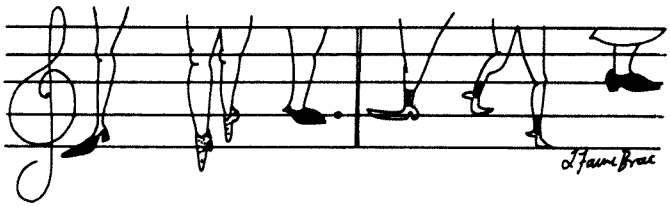
Hair also.

The new tonality shocked like the old atonality; now that there's no prevailing fashion, any point on the tonality scale will do. Personally, however, I prefer it above the knee.

Martin Wesley-Smith 24.2.82

We live in exciting times. The stylistic developments that have overtaken music in the twentieth century have been prodigious, ranging from the veiled tonality of Debussy through integral serialism, the exploitation of chance to the discovery of non-western music. Add to this the resources of the electronic revolution, and the variety of techniques that confront composers today is profuse in the extreme. It is little wonder that the 'eighties seem to point towards a form of synthesis in which tonality has a part to play. If, at present, there is a tendency to look over the shoulder nostalgically at a late romantic past, it is also certain that the more fundamental aspects of tonality, as a primary force in music, will lead toward fresh uses and an enriched means of musical expression.

Peter Tahourdin 18.2.82



Schoenberg, Weill and the Musical Cause. continued from page 16

49. ibid. pp.116-117.
50. Dietrich Stern, "Zur Theorie des musikalischen Materials bei Adorno und Eisler", **Hanns Eisler**, 1975, p.143.
51. Blume, op. cit. p.122.
52. Kurt Weill, "New Opera", in Kowalke, **Kurt Weill in Europe**, p.464.
53. ibid.
54. ibid.
55. ibid, pp.465-466.
56. Weill, "Busoni's Faust", in Kowalke, pp.468-469.
57. Weill, "Shifts in Musical Composition", in Kowalke, p.478.
58. Weill, ibid. p.480.
59. Kowalke, op. cit. p.110.
60. cf. Schoenberg, op. cit. p.98.
61. Kowalke, op. cit, p.117; cf. Weill, "On Gestic Music", in the same volune.
62. Weill, "New Opera", in Kowalke, p.465.
63. Tony Bennett, **Formalism and Marxism** p.56.
64. ibid. pp.76-77.
65. As Willett points out, op. cit. p.162.
66. Kowalke, op. cit. pp.110-112.
67. Hanns Eisler (with T. Adorno), **Composing for the Films**, 1951, o. x.
68. ibid.
69. Bertolt Brecht, "The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre", in **Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic**, 1964, pp.41-42.
70. David Drew "Kurt Weill and his Critics", **Times Literary Supplement** Oct. 3, 1975, p.1143.
71. ibid.
72. ibid. p.1144.
73. ibid.
74. Brecht, op. cit.
75. Kowalke, p.109.
76. ibid. p.104.
77. ibid.
78. Brewster, op. cit.
79. Brecht, op. cit. p.35.
80. ibid. p.36.
81. ibid. p.37.
82. ibid., p.39.
83. ibid.
84. Kowalke, op. cit. p.98, p.101.
85. Brecht, **Mahagonny**, translation provided in liner notes accompanying recorded version. (Publication information unavailable.)
86. Adorno, "Music and Technique", 1977, p.82.
87. Stern, op. cit., p.149.
88. Eisler, op. cit., pp.32-44.
89. Drew, op. cit. p.1143.
90. Stern, op. cit. p.151.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor. "Music and Technique", **Telos** 32 (Summer 1977) pp.79-94.
Bennett, Tony. **Formalism and Marxism**. London: Methuen & Co. 1979.
Blume, Friedrich. **Classic and Romantic Music: A Comprehensive Survey**. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1970.
Boulez, Pierre. "Stravinsky and the Century: Style or Idea?", in **Saturday Review**, May 29, 1971, pp.39-41, 58-59.
Bourdieu, Pierre. "Intellectual Field and Creative Project", in **Knowledge and Control**, ed. M.F.D. Young. London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971.

Brecht, Bertolt. **Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic**. Ed. by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964.
Brewster, Ben. "From Shklovsky to Brecht: A Reply". **Screen**, Summer 1974. Volume 15 No.2. pp.82-102.
Dahlhaus, Carl. "Neo-Romanticism", in **Nineteenth-Century Music** III/2 (1979) pp.97-105.
——— . "Schoenberg and Schenker". **Royal Music Association Centenary Essays**. Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 100: 209-215, 1974.
——— . "Some Models of Unity in Musical Form". **Journal of Music Theory** 19 (1), Spring 1975, pp.2-30.
Drew, David. "The History of Mahagonny". **Musical Times** 104 (1963) pp.18-24.
——— . "Kurt Weill and his Critics". **Times Literary Supplement** October 3, 1975; October 10, 1975.
Einstein, Alfred. **Music in the Romantic Era**. New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 1947.
Eisler, Hanns. **A Rebel in Music**. (Manfred Grabs, ed.) New York: International Publishers, 1978.
——— . (With Theodor Adorno) **Composing for the Films**. London: Dennis Dobson Lted, 1951.
Feher, Ferenc. "Negative Philosophy of Music — Positive Results". **New German Critique** No. 4, Winter 1975. pp.99-111.
Kowalke, Kim. **Kurt Weill in Europe**. umi Research Press. Ann Arbor: 1979.
Kuspit, Donald B. "The Unhappy Consciousness of Modernism". **Artforum** January 1981.
Lessem, Alan P. **Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg: The Critical Years, 1908-1922**. UMI Research Press, 1979.
Lyotard, Jean-Francois. "Adorno as the Devil". **Telos** 19, Spring 1974, pp.128-137.
Ringer, Alexander. "Dance on a Volcano: Notes on Musical Satire and Parody in Weimar Germany". **Comparitive Literature Studies** Vol. XII No.3, September 1975. pp.248-259.
——— . "Schoenberg, Weill, and Epic Theatre". JASI IV/1, January 1980. pp.77-97.
Rosen, Charles. **Arnold Schoenberg**. New York: Viking Press, 1975.
Schoenberg, Arnold. **Style and Idea** (Ed. by Leonard Stein). London: W.&J. Mackay Ltd. Belmont Music Publishers, 1975.
Sessions, Roger. "Music in Crisis: Some Notes on Recent Musical History" in **Collected Essays** (n.d.)
Solomon, Maynard. "Beethoven, Sonata and Utopia". **Telos** 9: Fall 1971. pp.32-47.
Stern, Dietrich. "Zur Theorie des musikalischen Materials bei Adorno und Eisler". (my translation) **Hanns Eisler** Berlin: Argument-Verlag BmbH 1975 pp.141-153.
Stuckenschmidt, H.H. **Twentieth Century Music**. World University Library. McGraw-Hill Book Col, 1973.
Willett, John. **Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety, 1917-1933**. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

ON THE ARTIST'S SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND TASKS

Mauricio Kagel

If, in recent history, there has frequently been a **relative need** for music (for the church, the aristocracy, the concert life of the bourgeoisie) in today's society there is perhaps no compelling need for art and music, since a product is turned out which is neither indispensable nor a response to a genuine demand. Music and art are indeed necessary, but they are not necessities of life.

No work of music — not even an oft-repeated repertoire piece — would be missed if it had remained unwritten. This seemingly pessimistic point of view, however, has some important consequences for the composer, enabling him (her) to work with a certain ease of mind: theoretically he can and need write only what seems necessary to himself. It means a change, too, in the way contemporary art and music relate to the society which — only hesitantly — consumes this nourishment of the spirit.

More frequently and forcibly than in the past, composers reflect problems in their works which are extra-musical in origin. Political and economic relationships, for example, often provide the impulse for a contemporary work. Such far-reaching **ideologising** of composition runs parallel to a systematic exploration of the relationships between composition, reception and dissemination. 'Ideologising' here refers not so much to the political meaning of the word, but rather to the conscious inclusion of **ideas**, which only to a limited extent can be realised in acoustic terms, and thus require explanation. For this reason extra-musical ideologies, when expressed in music, always have a sense of incompleteness, a further reason being that explanations translated into musical notes are scarcely able to alleviate social needs. Music can, on the other hand, reflect on aspects of general social questions, particularly those aspects which touch on musical life; it can communicate perceptions and stimulate thoughts by which producer and consumer alike move beyond merely musical-aesthetic sensations. Music has indeed a diversity of meanings: it has a special position as the realisation of a definite acoustic order; it has relevance as an expression of every social praxis, or of every order which manifests itself in social terms; it has significance as a cultural component of every ethnology (both European and non-European). And it is precisely this diversity which encourages today's composer to regard his activity in a more multi-faceted way than in the past.

Art-music or "serious" music, like every other artistic discipline which seeks to stimulate thoughts and sensations by non-verbal means, comes up against a complex network of expectations and habits. The composing of further pieces would seem pointless, however, if composers did not continually seek to supplement the familiar and accustomed arrangements of notes with new ones, or to replace outworn working procedures. The composer's need to make acoustic messages can scarcely be separated form his ongoing and necessary task of confronting what already exists. Every musical style exhibits at the peak of its development language-like characteristics, which remain ever present in the consciousness of the composer. This storing of musical-historical data in his memory is not merely an inescapable fact: such data is also indispensable for the invention of anything new. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to consider the conditions of creation and reception of music — including the new music of any historical period — independently of the powerful pressures towards disseminating it successfully. The consumption of utilitarian music (Gebrauchsmusik), for example, has increased so enormously that works which were not originally intended for the genre of light-music have taken on the character of serious entertainments, and thus are made available for further processing in the light-music industry. Genuinely new musical ideas nowadays are worn out much more quickly than ever before. Some reasons for this are familiar, such as the rapid dissemination brought about by records, radio and television. Composers often involuntarily produce the sound models for such practical applications, or consciously play the market of Gebrauchsmusik, one striking example being electronic and concrete music. Soon after its development in the mid-fifties a catalogue of standard effects and montaged sounds was exploited for use in radio plays, documentary film, theatre music, ballet, and elsewhere. For the non-concertgoing listener who consumes music in an incidental manner it was this electronic-concrete scenery of sound and noise which made the deepest impression on his acoustic awareness, rather than the works of electronic and concrete music, the content of which was more unaccustomed. One might speak here of industrially applicable academic light-music, the marketability of which is virtually its tradition its conditions being established as early as the nineteen-twenties. Seldom before that — the one exception might be the Baroque period — has the use of such similar material been promoted for serious music, for music disguised as serious and for light-music, as has been the case in the last 60 years, whereby the apparatus for the dissemination of contemporary music has permanently demanded premiere performances but at the same time takes fright at genuinely experimental works. Broadcasting organisations, concert promoters and festivals have in this way favoured a style which by its standardised formulas has led to a paralysis of musical thought.

Compositional production today also faces the problem of attaining a reception by the listener that is adquate, active and therefore fruitful. This task is only partly addressed by the demand — reasonable in itself — that one should compose specifically for an audience for whom a given subject matter and musical language is relevant. Every composer, unless for deliberately backward-looking programmatic reasons, produces **contemporary** music to a greater or lesser extreme. In doing so, he inevitably distances himself from the majority of listeners who attend concerts of the standard repertoire as conventional music-lovers. Music is chiefly conveyed as shapes of melody, harmony, tone-colour or rhythm, which — in various degrees depending on the experience and sensitivity of the listener — can be perceived as formal processes. Even if the listener does not have command of the terms which enable him to describe exactly what was heard, he bases his judgements on comparisons with previously heard works which have left a residual impression on him. The model of such works serves as a standard by which he compares unfamiliar pieces, characterising their successions of musical shapes as logical or incomprehensible, euphonious or unpleasant, eventful or tedious. Statements by listeners whose musical judgement is not professional always demonstrate a characteristic dilemma of musical reception: whereas musical professionals can relativise the essential stylistic features of most music by placing them in relation to a historical continuum, the layman tends to measure acoustic information in terms of absolute values. Form, content and expression, technique, craft and material are notions in art and music which constantly change in their conception. A fixed scale of values here is quite unthinkable, because music develops in such a way that characteristics which have been important at one particular time are rejected or completely ignored in the period which follows. Thus negation could be seen as the propelling force of musical evolution, a force, however, which does not operate mechanically by predictable laws, but is subject to ever-changing processes.

It seems superfluous to invent continually new catchwords for the rapid changes in stylistic features in order to divide trends of composition into clearly defined phases. With regard to current developments, however, even allowing for caution about premature codifying, one fundamental feature can be observed:—the breaking up of the traditional boundaries of genres and typologies, the clearest case being that of new Music-Theatre. The various branches of traditional theatre—stage-play, melodrama, opera, ballet,—have increasingly dissolved out of their rigid divisions into a continuous scale of scenic representation. New composite forms are more

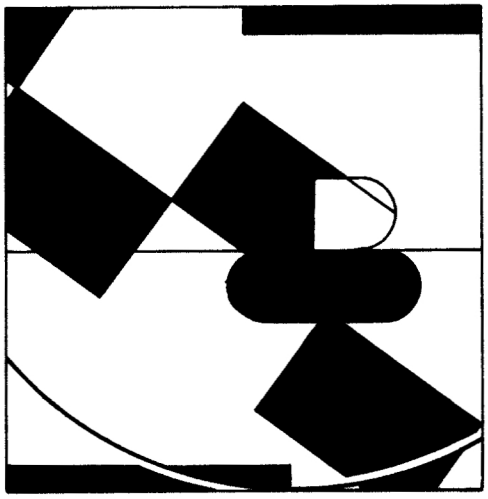
complex and less clear-cut with regard to their type. The unambiguous character of terms such as tragic and comic has also been relativised. New Music-Theatre is not a stylistically fixed form of theatre existing alongside others, but rather the application of muscial thought to the elements of theatre-words, light and tone-colours and tempi. It thus has primarily to do with a musicalising of the forms of representation and of the relationships between the players. Here there is no simulating or describing, and scarcely any narrating. It remains an invaluable characteristic of both old and new Music-Theatre that no continuous plot is necessary in order to make the scenic representation convincing, since **musical** completeness can be conveyed even with the residue of a plot. In order to unite music and theatre into a third dimension, however, there is a need for the utmost clarity. Such clarity is at the same time a means whereby the watching listner can be activated, in that he is given a view of **what** is happening and **how** it is made. The more closed the processes of realisation in the scenic representation remain to the listener, the less his active participation can be awakened.

An excellent opportunity for constructing clearer communication is offered by the radio play, a genre that is neither literary or musical but merely acoustical, and of indeterminate content. This special radio form fundamentally depends on a particular kind of clarity whereby the listener senses no need for the things that he hears to be made visible. Neither opera nor theatre permit such overstepping of the acoustic boundary. The visual medium, too, is considerably more encumbered by the meaning of a given picture and by the progression of a — more or less — sensible dramaturgy than is the radio play. One reason for this is that television or film claims the spectator's whole attention, whereas another simultaneous activity is possible while listening to the radio. Composing radio plays is not a substitute for all the other possibilities of using language in music, but the contact with radio plays has broadened the scope of musical material and vice versa.

The removal of boundaries around dimensions of composition has led to the further result that their graphic representation has become freely available. The measure whereby the newest forms of notation are judged to be valid or invalid is invariably still related to the quality of their interpretative solution; this question is both misleading and tedious with regard to pieces which lay no claim to a fixed pattern, since they indicate in the first instance only a tracing of conjectured spheres — this being the case with most of the graphic scores of recent years. The conection which could determine possible relationships between music and painting would above all depend on the technical factor. If the musical translation of structural processes and formal principles which are purely graphic in origin is tied to the composer's contemporary interpretation and his craft, it becomes a very individual, almost private matter. The musical application most likely to be found would be for the consequences of pictorial creative thought at the point when essentially new arrangements and manipulations of the material are being formulated. It is in the nature of musical notation that such consequences need not be visible: the depicted signs serve only the purpose of further interpretation.

Contradictions and refractions in the composition, as well as refunctioning and alienation, are components of the communication with the listener and spectator. Communicating — sharing with — can certainly be regarded as an essential goal of every artist's work. Whether one uses notes or noises, colours or objects for this purpose is of no concern, so long as thoughts are communicated which can be worked through and shared. Music and art in general are not, however, sufficient on their own if they burst the recipient's own co-ordinates of education and experience. The necessity then arises to assist further with words. It was an error in the past to assume that music as autonomous art scarcely required explication or commentary: this did not accord with the circumstances. Neither music nor art can do without the written and spoken word, in order to involve all those who are open in their perceptions in an ongoing process of enlightenment.

Transl. John McCaughey
from **Meyers Neues Lexikon**, Band IV,
bibliographisches Institut Mannheim, Copyright 1979.
Reprinted by permission of the author.



**AUSTRALIAN MUSIC AND SOUND SCULPTURE ARCHIVE.
CALL FOR AUSTRALIAN WORKS SINCE 1970. Ros Bandt.**

I am interested in receiving and collating any information concerning musical art works which combine the concept of sounds ordered in time, MUSIC, with physical space, ENVIRONMENT. If you have composed pieces or performed or exhibited works which you think may be related to the project or seem to belong in any of the categories below, please send me all the information you can. Tapes, scores, program notes, film, video, slides, discs, descriptions, maps or any instruction material or documentation are relevant. Please indicate exactly what you want returned, or the availability of unsent materials.
The aims of the archive are:
to document this important body of Australian Musical Art eventually in the form of a monograph and disc,
To disseminate and communicate this body of work both here and overseas.
Every effort will be made to present works in a non-evaluative way and in consultation with the artists. The focus of the book and archive will be the different ways in which music, sculpture, and the environment come together.
Have you used the environment in any of these ways?
Environmental sounds as sound sources or triggers-natural or manipulated.
Outdoor spaces as performance spaces or happenings
Acoustic spaces as sound modifiers
Sound sculpture
Installations
Permanent new sound environments
Combined forms
Other

Please send all materials to Ros Bandt,
14 Collings St.,
West Brunswick 3055 Vic.

ESSENDON AIRPORT

Ian Cox

STATEMENT:

Essendon Airport believes that 'music' is significantly more than the sounds of musical instruments - more than the 'pure' aesthetic practice of ordering notes, rhythms, effects into self-sufficient, self-justifying works - more than 'music in a Vacuum'. Our area of interest includes the social, ideological and historical structures - The 'meanings' of music - which surround and inform it.

This article - written in the form of a scripted (i.e. artificial) interview - is an attempt to explain our involvement in rock and pop music\which is, for us, one particular area of interest.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ESSENDON AIRPORT

Q: What is Essendon Airport?

A: Essendon Airport is a group of four people who play musical instruments with different degrees of competence.

Q: You mean Essendon Airport is a band?

A: Yes.

Q: A rock band?

A: Yes.

Q: A pop/funk/dance band?

A: Yes.

Q: A structuralist band?

A: Yes.

Q: An experimental art band?

A: Yes.

Q: A band to make you think and a band which provides pleasure?

A: Yes. Essendon Airport is all these things and all these things at once. We have many faces and speak in many voices.

Essendon Airport began in 1978 as a duo - David Chesworth and Robert Goodge - playing a music that was variously called light, minimal, repetitive, melodic, electric, electronic, boring - 'an electric chamber music'. In 1981 the duo was joined by Paul Fletcher and Ian Cox making the current four-piece rock, pop, funk, repetitive, melodic, minimal, electric, boring, structuralist, art band Essendon Airport. The band has performed in Melbourne and Sydney at a wide variety of venues from the Sydney Biennale to art galleries to rock pubs supporting Jimmy and the Boys and The Church etc...

Essendon Airport has made two independent records: 'Sonic Investigations (of the trivial).....' (Essendon Airport Duo 1979) and 'Talking to Cleopatra' with Anne Cessna (1980). An album will be released soon. A piece of music is on the new music flexi-disc in the forth-coming Art Network No. 6.

Q: That's quite impressive but what does Essendon Airport do?What is your music like?

A: Our starting point is a desire to make music - to play our instruments - because we have skills and talents (like millions of people; talent is certainly not scarce and there is nothing especially outstanding about ours) on the instruments which are the standard tools of the trade: synthesizer, electric guitar, saxophone,drums. We can do it; so we do it. Our starting point is that desire.

Q: But you are telling me nothing. What is your music like?What are your influences?

A: The easiest answer to that is that the music is everything except what we don't want it to be. Our starting point is that desire but our method is reductive. Before we know what we want to be we

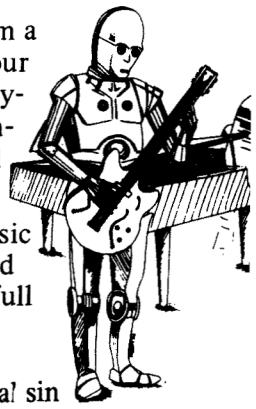
know what we don't want to be. We are musically aware (who isn't). We've grown up in Australia listening to the radio and watching T.V. and feel trained, cynical, alert about what we see and hear in rock and pop music and the whole vast manipulative industry that supports it. Pop is a vast world full of adolescent expressiveness, transparent posing, indulgence, embarrassment, masturbation, naivety, conservatism, stupidity. You become a connoisseur of low pleasures - a connoisseur of the ludicrous - with a cynical, ambiguous relation to your field. A band in Melbourne announces their latest song: 'My Love is not Deceased, its just Deseased'. What are we to do in this realm? Give up hope? Retreat to the 'serious' music of the conservatorium or to art? But we love pop. We love its vitality and immediacy; its effectiveness, contagiousness, relevance; its freedom from 'seriousness'. So we insert ourselves into the pop world, the pop context, but with a strong sense of all the sort of pop nonsense we will not do. So the music evolves: a pure, bare, paired down, minimal pop music - like a skeleton of pop music where all the bones, the constituent elements are totally clear. That is why the music represents what is left after we have stripped away the rubbish and pretensiousness of pop.

Q: You talk about stripping away the nonsense of pop. Well, we all agree that most bands are pretty terrible, but what about adding something new? What about originality?

A: Essendon Airport shares an intuition with a whole group of artists working today and that is a reluctance (in our case a definite policy of refusal) to attempt to create 'new forms'. The standard history of art taught today is a long narrative about inspired individuals and the new forms - the innovations - they contributed thus enlarging the language of art available. With post-modernism the idea of newness becomes a big problem. The language has been enlarged and enlarged to include anything and everything. We've learnt the lesson that anything can be 'art' - any idea, object, sound, time, space - if it is named and experienced as 'art'. 'Art is an adjective not a noun' is the conclusion of one Melbourne artist. The language has been enlarged to capacity. It will go no further and any artistic practice obsessed with 'newness' is both fundamentally naive and doomed to failure. We are not saying that the work of the future will not be in some way different to work now or in the past but to work as a creative person under the banner of 'newness' or 'originality' which is the heritage of modernism is essentially a nostalgic, conservative activity.

Essendon Airport, as an experimental 'art band' deep in the world of rock and pop, embraces these insights and attempts to incorporate them in a way in the music. We attempt to play nothing new and the art music of the conservatorium with its outdated concern with 'originality', 'quality' is the last model we would emulate.

The standard question of rock journalism 'What are your influences?' is of social relevance to us (and our answer seems designed to antagonize): we have no 'musical influences' because we are all influences. It's not a matter of us being influenced by other music; we are 'other music'. We didn't make it up; we got it from somewhere like everybody else. What are your influences? The history of music! As authors - original authors - we are non-existent, dead. We regurgitate, quote, combine, juxtapose, 'rip-off' existing musical forms. Like everyone else who ever played an instrument we pick up ours and play the music that we know, the music that just comes out, the music 'in our heads' which is the music in everybody's heads, the music which our instruments play, the music one plays if one is a musician. How can we claim control (claim a life as authors) when everything is determined from elsewhere? It is our guitar rather than our guitarist which plays that contagious funk. And it is our saxophone not our saxophone player (in the jazz tradition of the expressive personal soloist) that blurts free jazz solos. It's unorthodox to say these things, yes, but to us its so reasonable, so self evident, so modest and honest.



Any rock band playing in a pub is traceable to certain sources. They didn't invent rock music complete with its instrumentation, its theatre, its gestures, meanings, myths. They inherited it, mimicked it, they said 'Hey, listen to that. We can do that too!' Yet the rock press is full of interviews and articles that perpetuate the myths of individuality and originality. 'We don't categorize ourselves', they say. 'We just play our music'. In Essendon Airport we attempt to acquit ourselves with an unheard of honesty in this area. Commiting the cardinal sin we announce to the rock world (as it is as well to the world of art and 'seriousmusic'): 'We are not 'original'. Everything we do is copied, stolen, requisitioned. We didn't make up those words; we didn't make up those riffs or melodies or sounds or rhythms. We heard them and desired to play them ourselves.

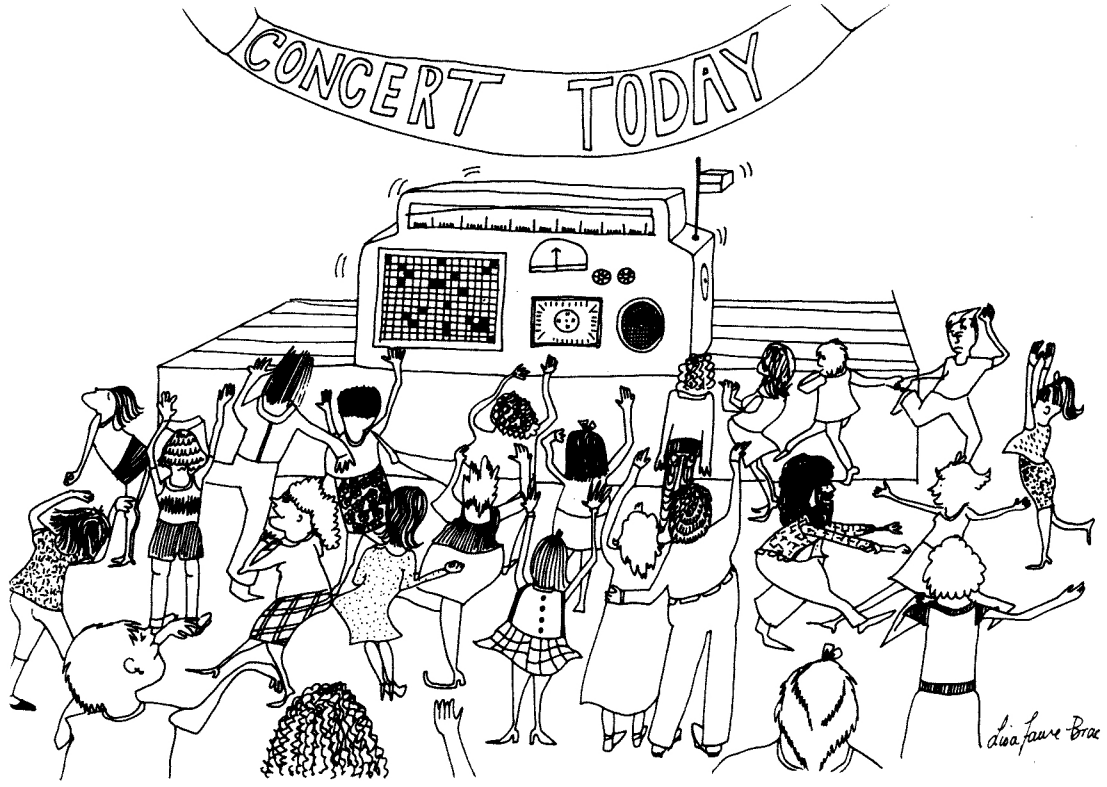
Q: Yes, but that's not the whole story. Essendon Airport does have a recognizable different sound so surely that is something new about the music?

A: Yes, there is that 'Essendon Airport sound'. We are 'recognizable', 'different'. We don't sound like anyone else but it's not something we've ever wanted to deliberately work on or develop or exploit in any way and it's not something we really value. Its not important or special - because its just the inevitable outcome of the different musical histories, histories of listening, influences as well as the habitual mannerisms and 'tics' of the four of us as musicians. And really, it can be said of anyone - it just depends on who and how acute the listener is. We tend to do things in particular ways (there's nothing special about that) but we're also prepared to disguise ourselves - to tease the myths of 'recognizability' (i.e: recognizability = greatness, quality, depth) via record production or 'play' with 'stylistics'.

Everything that we play is used, second (third, fourth, fifth.....) hand but it is all combined and re-assembled in a way that is clinical, deadpan, detached - a way that subverts pop. It's as if each pop element we play is offered with a clinical distance, as though somehow in quotation marks and in doing so we are intervening in the process whereby these forms create their usual meanings or presences or 'feels'. We are playing pop music but we are not presenting it 'straight'. We are not trying to convince anyone that we 'really mean' what we are playing.

Our 'sincerity' is not at stake. We play pop music with an ironic detachment which is really just an awareness of what we are really doing - an awareness of where it all comes from and what it all can mean - an awareness of the processes of history and of the signification - of its saturated condition and of the plethora of possible meanings.

When someone plays a 'basic' rock riff or an 'advanced' atonal melody or a 'classy' jazz head you get a complex sense of what that musical element 'means' - what it is being 'asked' to convey in the particular context; what it has meant in the past, etc., etc..... You invariably get someone up there self-consciously trying to define or describe or justify themselves by the music they choose to play - saying: 'Listen, here is my music; here is myself.' Its a process more often than not tinged with desperation or foolishness because it is usually so obviously not 'my music' but 'some other music' from somewhere else in time and place. In Essendon Airport, we feel we can see these ways that music works - the self-conscious ways musicians stand for their music, and the claims they are making as they play - and it is our deliberate desire to make that issue of authorship (and musicians' pride in that authorship) as ambiguous as possible. We want to make people wonder why we are playing what we are playing - wonder about our relation to the music - and what it means to do so. We want people to ask: 'What



do they think they're doing?' and follow it through. We want to disorient - in the most positive, revealing way - to 'get inside' those processes of authorship - subverting notions of sincerity, originality, of musicians who 'really mean' what they play - to alert a listener to a sense of the invisible structures of listening - to carry on a sort of discussion about the act of listening as the listener listens.

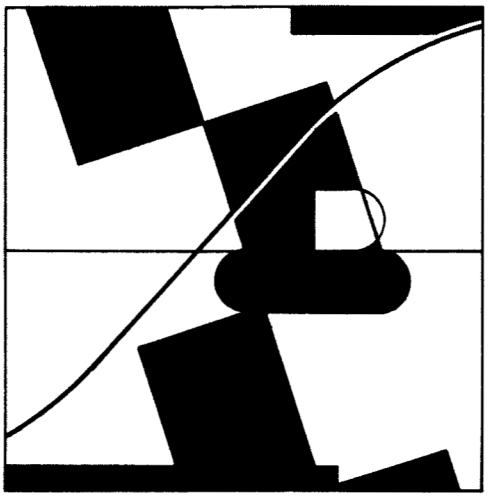
Q: What about structuralism?

A: Structuralism is a big word but it's no big deal. It's an analytic tool or style based on a few fundamental assumptions about the way information or ideology is concealed and conveyed in all sorts of everyday things. It's about 'hidden' meanings which come to light when one develops a style of 'reading between the lines'. It's something everybody has always done - with differing kind of rigour. It's a way of thinking objectively, logically, analytically and as such nothing special. Anyone who has ever argued back at a Coke ad on the T.V. pointing out some coersive tactic of the advertisers has mounted a structuralist analysis. Structuralism involves analysing (or destructing) a text and there is no richer, more knotted, saturated, complex a text than rock music and the rock band performing on stage. It's all there: sex, fantasy, identification, hero worship, scopophilia, subversion etc. etc..... But in Essendon Airport we don't attempt a methodical, systematic analysis of a chosen area - which is certainly a possible kind of structuralist practice that is currently being undertaken very successfully in Melbourne. Essentially we do what we know we can do best, which is play music. Perhaps we lack the requisite theatrical presence - the skill as actors - to attempt a methodical breakdown of the constituent parts that make up rock or pop or funk or whatever. And we are certainly aware of the problems involved where an elaborate performance involving visuals and sound is read by an audience as parody or 'hip' comedy or ironic theatre restauant entertainment. So we do what we do best: Essendon Airport play Essendon Airport music - a subverted pop music that is both everybody's pop music but unlike anything else.

Structuralism is just something we know about. In a way, yes, we're all converted. We 'believe' in being logical (as long as it seems useful) but structuralism does not determine our music. It's not an 'influence', but it colours our practice and how we think about what we are doing. Because to 'embrace' structuralism is necessarily at the same time to relinquish or see through certain prevalent romantic myths about the 'artist' 'creating' 'art' which are taught and perpetuated in a million disguises - the myths that make interviews with rock bands so ludicrous (see anything at all written about 'The Birthday Party').

Structuralism (or just being intuitively on the wave-length) inspires a new rationality, a new sanity, in thinking about creativity, art. It leads us to distinguish clearly between the thinking and speaking about art that is concrete, objective, testable, shareable and that which is subjective, intangible, poetic. We don't value either more highly than the other (which is itself a huge trap) but are quick to point out that logical structures, step by step arguments, polemical claims can only be built on concrete foundations. Arguments built ultimately on subjective positions that aspire through devious means to objectivity fall to pieces at the first challenge. In Essendon Airport we deal with the objective, the material. The rest is left pretty much to look after itself.

Recordings and information on Essendon Airport may be obtained from: Innocent Records
24 Diamond St.
Niddrie 3042
Vic.
Australia



REPORT: SYNTST
An interactive synthesis program for the development of timbre.

Graeme Gerrard

An interactive sound synthesis program, SYNTST, has been written for the PDP-11/10 minicomputer. Designed as a timbre development tool, SYNTST synthesises single notes using pre-selected 'computer instruments' and parametric data entered interactively via a menu-based protocol.

Computer music at La Trobe University is at present centred around the MUSIC4BF sound synthesis program originally written by Hubert S. Howe (1) in 1966-67.

The program was installed on the University's DEC system10 computer by Graham Hair, and later implemented on the VAX-11/780 by myself and Jim Sosnin.

Because MUSIC4BF requires such a large amount of memory to run, it is not feasible to run it on the Music Department's PDP-11/10. Therefore, the present method is to synthesize the music using the University's VAX, write the samples to magtape, and transfer the tape to the PDP-11/10 where the samples are converted to sound.

This is a tediously slow and error prone method, especially in the development and test stages of new computer instruments. Moreover, it inhibits any performer/computer interaction whatsoever.

The SYNTST program was written to help alleviate the problem of designing and testing new instrument structures and parametric data.

In designing the program then the major aims were as follows:-

1. It had obviously to be interactive.
2. Data arrived at through its use had to be directly useable with the main synthesis program, MUSIC4BF.
3. To ensure portability and exchange of instrument code, it needed to be written (mainly) in the FORTRAN language.
4. It had to run on the Department's PDP-11/10, with it's modest 28K words of memory.

Because SYNTST generates only single notes, none of the score handling routines usually associated with large synthesis programs, such as Pass 1 and Pass 2 of MUSICV or MUSIC4BF, were necessary. Instead, each computer instrument has its own input menu for function and note data input and verification.

The program itself is structured so that a synthesis instrument and its associated menu exists as subroutines which may be linked with the main program, as required. To date, several of these instruments have been implemented, ranging from basic sampling of a stored waveform to complex frequency modulation and waveshaping synthesis. Each instrument contains a help facility which describes parameter significance and sample values. Default parameters are set for each instrument and commonly used functions such as sine waves, envelopes etc. are retrievable from disc rather than being regenerated each session.

SYNTST calculates the samples and writes them directly to magtape for conversion to sound. Thus a note may be replayed many times, and there is no risk of loss. The tape handling routines are written in PDP-11 assembler.

Using the present computer the turn around time is rather slow, (of the order of 3 to 4 minutes calculation time for 1 second of complex frequency modulated sound, with random vibrato and frequency skew). It is hoped that this time will be considerably reduced when we aquire a new compiler which will allow floating point arithmetic to be performed by the hardware. Certainly, the program will run faster on a larger computer, but because the program is in FORTRAN only the very simplest sounds could be calculated in real-time.

A manual and instrument catalogue are at present being written. Copies of the program are available from the author, care of La Trobe University Music Department. I wish to thank Mr. Jim Sosnin for his kind assistance and advice, and for permission to include his assembler conversion routines in SYNTST.

(1) Howe, Hubert. S. Jr. 'Electronic Music Synthesis' Wiley N.Y. 1975

COMPUTER MUSIC FROM GRAPHICS— A brief report on research in progress at LaTrobe University.

Brian Parish

The GRAPHMUS graphics interpretation package was implemented on the University's VAX 11/780 computer in 1981. It interprets graphic data to produce finished MUSIC4BF (1) scores, and may also be used in conjunction with other production methods to add sections or parameters to existing scores.

Entry of Graphics

Graphs are entered by means of a digitizing tablet, on which the composer simply traces the desired shape. This process is exterior to the GRAPHMUS package, each graph being stored as a separate file.

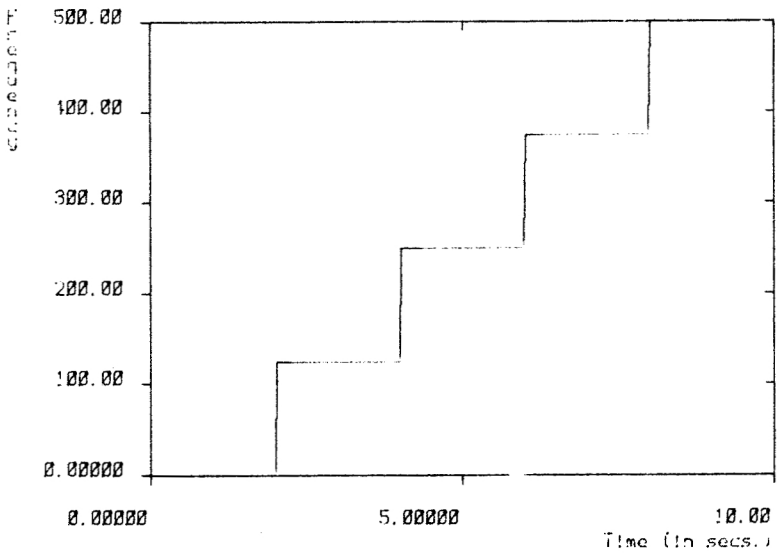
(1) MUSIC4BF is a large computer synthesis program to which the user supplies a 'score' and an 'orchestra'. The 'score' is a data file specifying (among other things) the start time, duration, and other parameters of each note to be 'played' by the 'orchestra'; The 'orchestra' is a FORTRAN sub-program which interprets this information to produce a file of numbers representing waveforms. These are then converted to voltages and passed to a loud speaker to produce sound.

There are two modes of entry: one for the specification of contours, where time is represented on the axis, and another for the entry of four channel panning tracks. The latter mode provides a direct correlation between the speed of entry and that of the resulting pan. The specification for example, of a gradual increase in the velocity of a moving sound, requires only that the composer make a corresponding increase in the speed at which the digitizing tablet cursor is moved.

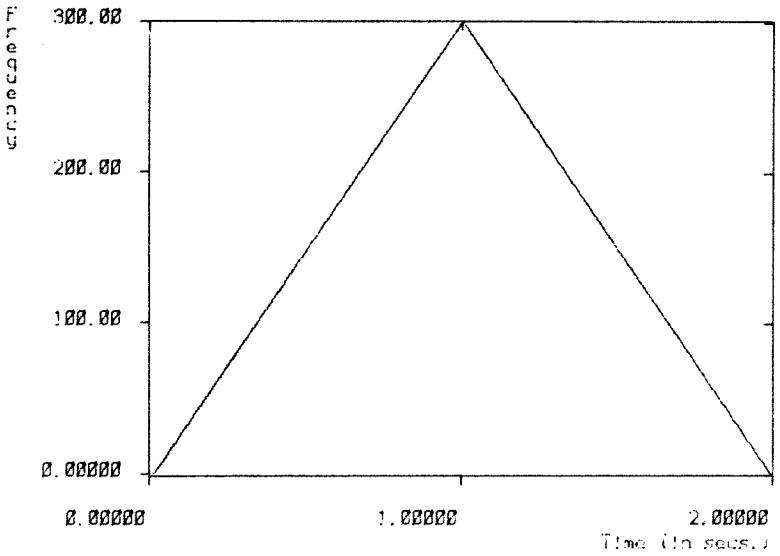
Constructing Graphic Hierarchies

While any musical parameter may be specified by the entry of a single graph, the composer may choose to construct the desired shape through the partitioning and superimposition of a number of layers. This is accomplished in a hierarchical system allowing progressively finer control at each level. The construction of a pitch contour to define a rising sequential movement, serves as an example of this procedure.

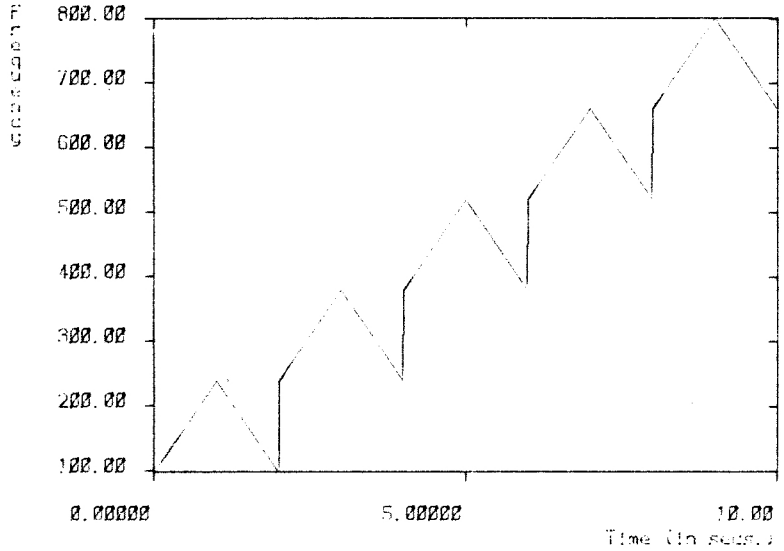
The main graph, controlling transposition, is entered as a number of rising steps, (fig. 1)



while the secondary contour defines the melodic fragment. (fig.2)



By partitioning the main graph into a number of equal parts corresponding to the number of steps, and superimposing the melodic contour on each, the sequence is obtained. (fig.3)



The extrapolation of this example to a larger number of levels, suggests that the capacity to partition and superimpose relatively simple shapes, is intrinsic to the accurate specification of the more intricate structures. Through this process, the time frame under consideration at any instant may be narrowed to allow control of the finest detail.

Using the System

Access to GRAPHMUS is through a data file specifying which contours are to be used for what purpose. This file is created with the help of the SCORE4 program which provides interactive data formatting and error checking, guiding the user through the process of data entry. Through this program, the user defines instruments in terms of a number of parameters, each of which may incorporate any number of levels. The SCORE4 program prompts the user for all data neccessary to the construction of the score, making the entry of this file suprisingly simple.

This form of data specification was considered desirable for two reasons:

1. It allows the alteration of the data through simple editing procedures.

2. It allows the execution of the process without user intervention, in 'batch' mode, necessitated by the large amounts of computer time used in the manipulation of graphic data.

Conclusion

The specification of musical ideas as contours allows the realization of both rigidly mathematical and totally intuitive musics, while avoiding much of the tedium of data entry. Although the composer may choose to exercise the finest control over every facet of a piece, perhaps as great an attraction lies in allowing the system to take care of some details. While there is no random element involved in score generation, the combination of a number of complex structures may easily yield unforeseen, and therefore potentially stimulating results.

THE BRAHMIN'S SON

David Hirst

This paper is both a chronicle of events and an exposition of the final result of what I would describe as an exercise in composition for computer synthesis. At the beginning of this exercise my objectives were to-

1) learn more about the MUSIC4BF synthesis program.

2) discover what problems confront the composer using this program on a large time-sharing computer.

3) resolve compositional questions of actually organising the available materials to produce the sonic expression/impression.

4) explore the performance aspects and to resolve any difficulties arising through the use of a live performer and computer synthesised accompaniment.

After some initial instruction in FORTRAN and certain aspects of MUSIC4BF, I determined that the learning process would be more efficient if I synthesised recognisable instrumental sounds using a methodology and numerical data that were already well documented. I decided to use the waveshaping method of synthesis so that, in future applications of this MUSIC4BF waveshaping instrument, data could be obtained from a real-time waveshaping synthesiser under development on the Latrobe University Music Department's PDP 11 computer.

Thus the orchestra program outlined by Beauchamp for the synthesis of cornet-like tones (1) was corrected and modified for our system, and appears in Appendix 1. Modifications included dimensioning for several simultaneous instruments, and the use of the non-linear table-lookup function 'NONLIN' which was written by Graeme Gerrard.

This orchestra was tested and after quite a few laborious test runs the required sounds were synthesised. The nature of the sounds were first determined. then composition was begun.

The piece was written for Tenor and computer cornets. Brahmin's Son uses a text which is an adaptation of the first chapter of Herman Hesse's book 'Siddhartha' (See score). The book is divided into twelve chapters, and it was envisaged that this piece would be the first in a series of twelve, written to express the events in the whole book.

Brass-like sounds were used to provide a fanfare opening for the section describing Siddhartha's youth. The first of the two movements is a commentary describing Siddhartha, peoples' attitudes towards him, the doubts generated by the process of growing up, and the entrance of the Samanas.

The second movement is more of a dialogue/recitative style. It articulates the conflict between Siddhartha's desire to leave home to follow the life of a Samana, and his father's reluctance to give his beloved son his consent.

The computer implementation was a direct transcription of the music score which appears in Appendix 3. The computer score (Appendix 5) begins with specification of function data and continues with specification of note data on lines which begin with 'I'. These lines are called 'I-cards'. By comparing the music score with the computer score one can observe that ten parameters must be specified for each note and, considering the number of notes in the piece, this represents a lot of typing. The 'carry feature' of MUSIC4BF reduces the amount of typing to some extent. Details of this and other features of MUSIC4BF may be found in Chapter Eight of Howe (1975). Appendix 1 (the orchestra program) gives details of the contents of 'Parameter Fields' of I-cards.

As the music score reveals, the pitch material is totally derived from the set which Forte (1973) labels 6-20: (0,1,4,5,8,9). An example of this set is given in Appendix 4 (a) (D,Eb,F ,G,A ,E). This all-combinatorial set contains the subset 4-7: (0,1,4,5). Appendix 4(b) shows that when 4-7 is combined with the transposition seven semitones above it the resultant cardinal 8 set is a South Indian scale. The piece explores the tension that arises through the simultaneous use of this scale, and the scale formed by the use of the intervals of 6-20 alone (see Appendix 4(c)).

The opening fanfare uses the progression outlined in Appendix 4(d) which is derived from the hexachords labelled as Hex 1 and Hex 2 in the matrix, Appendix 4(e). Hexachords 1 and 2 form the prime twelve-tone set, a literal statement of which appears at the beginning of the Tenor part. Although this segment is ordered, the remainder of the piece is not serial but is derived from all of the material in Appendix 4. An analysis has been rendered on the music score.

Rhythmic elements also express mild tension in movement one and greater tension in the second movement. Tension increases with the increasing rhythmic activity in the tenor line. The irregular vocal

rhythm attempts to break-up the syllabic rhythm of the text more and more as the piece proceeds.

Rhythmic tension is also supported by a conflict in the pitch-class material. In the Tenor, elements of South Indian scales descend chromatically (bars 48-51) over direct quotations of the matrix rows descending a whole-tone at a time. These segments always resolve/relax to the interval of a third, which is embodied in the final interval.

A new timbre, that of a deep bowed string-like sound, is introduced as instrument 5 in bar 48.

The reader may refer to the score for dynamic details, however note should be made of the fact that the computer instruments are limited to the broad 'timbral' dynamics of pp, mf, and ff. Provision is also made for the fine-tuning of real dynamics manifest as Parameter (4) of the I-cards, and notated adjacent to the conventional dynamics on the music score. Notice that the three catagories mentioned above each require their own envelope as complex tones have different spectral evolutions at different dynamic levels. These envelopes also have widely varying amplitude effects- hence the need for fine-tuning (see Appendix 5: Computer Score).

In summary the first movement can be described as a commentary which increases in tension as Siddhartha's restlessness increases. An extra voice is added (bars 25-29) to represent the entrance of the Samanas. Movement two expresses the conflict between father and son. The return of the opening rhythmic motif symbolises the last three lines of the text where Siddhartha is joined by the friend of his youth, his shadow, Govinda.

The Tenor part was also synthesised in the original computer run as a learning aid for the performer. This facilitates the resolution of synchronisation problems.

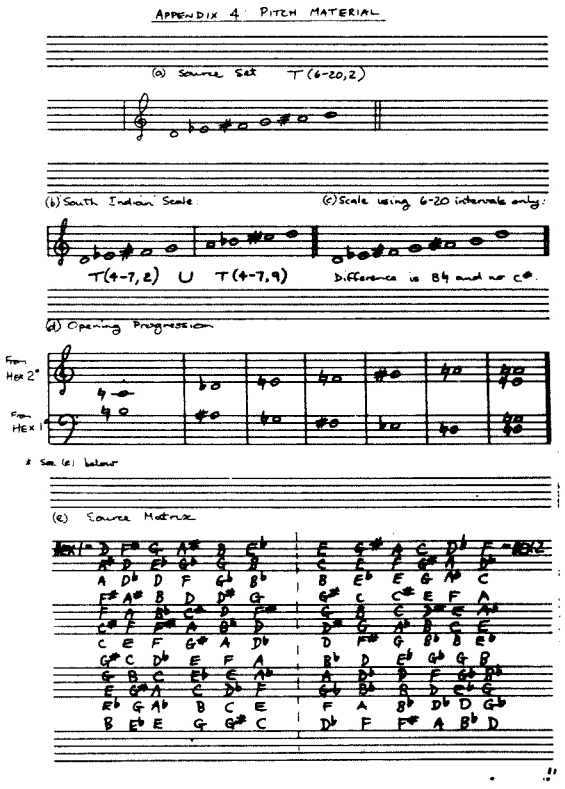
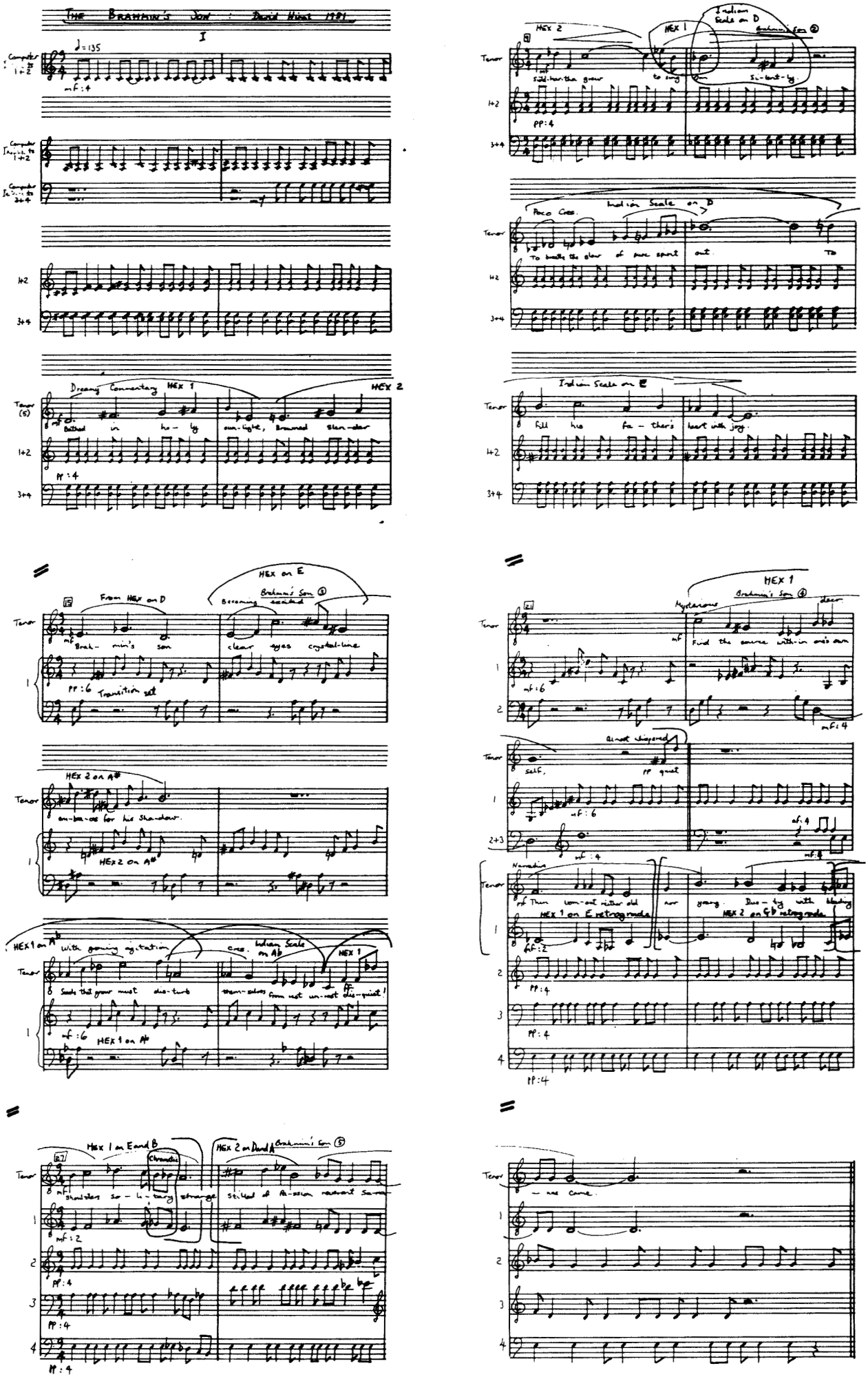
The composer is not aided, however, by having to use a large time-sharing computer for synthesis. The turn-around time between the written submissions to the batch queue and the return of the sound encoded tapes amounted to several days. A real-time interactive system would yield much more exciting results in sound experimentation.

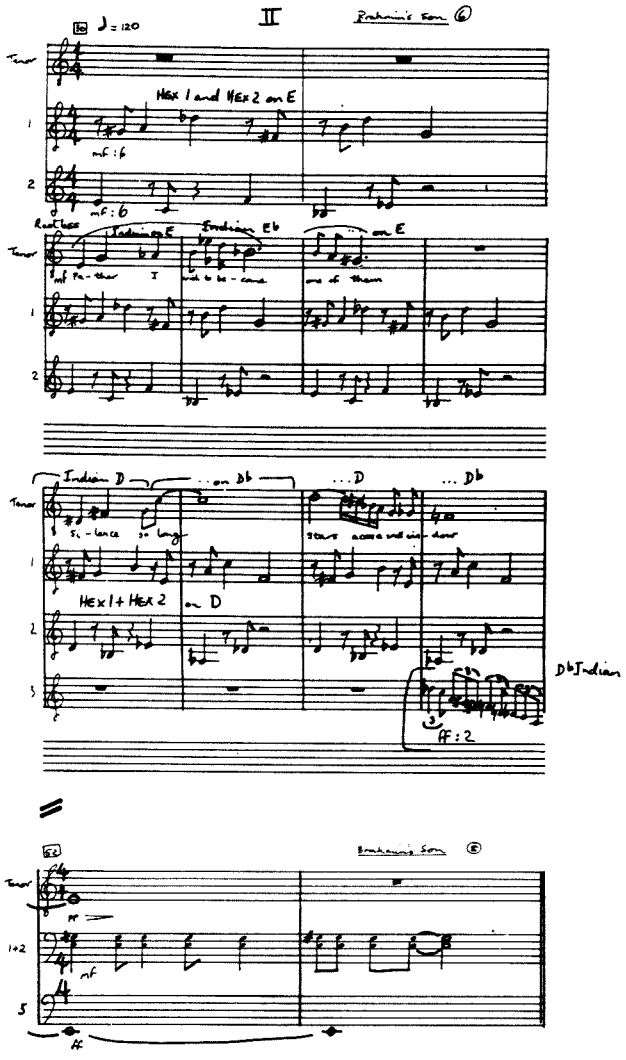
The real-time, monophonic synthesis program, STORM, was developed on the Latrobe University Music Department's PDP 11 computer by the author for such experimentation. STORM has a FORTRAN interactive main program, to preset parameters, and a MACRO assembler sub-program to perform the actual synthesis. It performs waveshaping with amplitude modulation which provides the same possibilities as a Frequency Modulation instrument. Pitches can be assigned to keys in any desired scale or pattern, enabling STORM to be used as a performance instrument, being played at the telekeyboard.

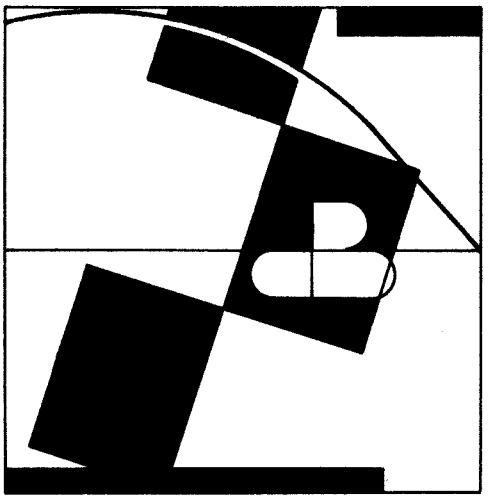
Thus a composer can use STORM to develop monophonic timbres and then, using the parameters thereby obtained, compose polyphonic music for the larger MUSIC4BF synthesis program. The different timbre introduced in bar 48 of Brahmin's Son was developed on an earlier version of STORM.

Not withstanding the problems of quotas and systems, Brahmin's Son is to be performed with a single speaker box and vocal musician placed several meters apart in the performance space, which is meant to heighten the feeling of intimacy and humanity of the performance.

APPENDIX 1: Orchestra Program

```
C*****************************************
C       BRAHMIN'S SON ORCHESTRA
C*****************************************
C
C I-CARDS HAVE P-FIELDS:
C P(4)=AMPLITUDE MULTIPLIER     P(5)=PITCH IN HERTZ
C P(6)=ENVELOPE MAXIMUM (AMOUNT OF LOOKUP)
C P(7)=ATTACK TIME IN SECS
C P(8)=DECAY TIME
C P(9)=TRANSFER FUNCTION NO.
C P(10)=ENVELOPE FUNCTION NO.
C FC=FILTER CUTOFF FREQ
C ZET=FILTER DAMPING FACTOR
C
        SUBROUTINE INITL
        COMMON P(480),SR, ON(99),N
        DIMENSION A(15,5),NEF(5),NTF(5),TA(5),TB(5),TD(5)
        REAL NONLIN
        DATA A/75*0./
        FC=1800.
        ZET=1./SQRT(2.)
        RETURN
        ENTRY SETUP
        A(1,N)=CYCLE(P(5))
        A(2,N)=P(6)
        A(3,N)=0.
        A(15,N)=P(4) * 6000.
        NEF(N)=P(10)
        NTF(N)=P(9)
        TA(N)=P(7)
        TD(N)=P(8)
        TB(N)=P(3)-(P(7)+P(8))
        CALL ENVSET(TA(N),TB(N),TD(N),A(4,N))
        CALL HF2SET(FC,ZET,A(8,N))
        RETURN
        ENTRY ORCH
        B=ENVEL3(A(2,N),NEF(N),A(4,N))
        BX=OSCIL1(B,A(1,N),1,A(3,N))
        FBX=NONLIN(A(15,N),BX,NTF(N))
C INSTRUMENT NO. 5 DOESN'T USE THE FILTER
        IF(N.EQ.5) GO TO 10
        FBX=HPF2(FBX,A(8,N))
10      CALL MOND(FBX)
        RETURN
        END
```

The Brahmin's Son : David Hirst 1991
I
Dreaming Connecting
Bathed in hu - ly
sun-light, Bronzed shan-der
Tenor (6)
Tenor
1+2
3+4
HEX 1
HEX 2
Indian Scale on D
Brahmin's Son ②
Poco Cres.
To bathe the glow of pure spirit out
Indian Scale on E
full his fa - ther's heart with joy.
HEX on E
From HEX on D
Brahmin's Son ③
Breaking
excited
Brah - min's son
clear eyes crystal-line
Transition set
HEX 2 on A#
em-bra-ces her sha-dow.
HEX 2 on A♭
HEX 1 on A♭
with growing agitation
cres.
Indian Scale on Ab
Souls that grow must dis-turb
storm-clouds from vast un-rest dis-quiet!
HEX 1 on A♭
HEX 1 on E and B
Chromatic
Brahmin's Son ⑤
HEX 2 on D and A
shoulders so - li - tary stranger
stilled & Ra-sion reverent Sa-
Mysterious
Brahmin's Son ④
dear
Find the source with-in one's own
HEX 1 on E retrograde
HEX 2 on Gb retrograde
Narration
Tenor
1
2
2+3
3
4
self,
pp quiet
almost whispered
Thus com-ent neither old nor young Dua - ty with blending
we come.





APPENDIX 5: Computer Score (excerpt)

```
C    This version created at 17:03:22 on  1-DEC-81
C    ********************************************
C     SCORE FOR BRAHMIN'S SON
C    ********************************************
C     F1 IS A COSINE FUNCTION DEFINED BY GEN 09
F 1       0.    9.1      1      1     90
C
C     F2 IS CREATED BY THE POLYNOMIAL GENERATOR GEN 15
F 2       0.   15.1   -1.4    1.4     12      0.  .3052-.0508  .2060  .6108-.2972
-.6547  .84141.1342-.7557-.9983  .2791  .3667
C
C     F3 IS CREATED AS A SEQUENCE OF STRAIGHT LINES BY GEN 07.
C     THIS IS USED BY THE ALPHA ENVELOPE (NORMALISED TO UNITY)
C FOR PP "CORNET" SYNTHESIS:
F 3       0.    7.1      0.     26    .06      6    .13     14    .60     19    .86
      7   .90     54    1.0     21    .90     26    .63     24    .61      9    .55
     14   .35     12    .31      9    .34     13    .23     15    .12     39    .03
     39   .01     35      0.    128      0.
C
C     F4 IS THE MF "CORNET" TONE ENVELOPE:
F 4       0     7.1      0.      7    .05      3    .12      9    .68     11    .83
     19   .91     16    .95     20    .97     42    .99     57   1.0      9    .98
     44   .93     18    .85     15    .77     20    .61     19    .34      8    .29
     12   .14     11    .07     19    .02     24      0.    127      0.
C
C     F5 IS THE FF "CORNET" TONE ENVELOPE:
F 5       0     7.1      0.      9    .04      8    .30      8    .82     12    .92
     90  1.0     72    .99     20    .97     17    .93     13    .9       6    .86
     55   .7     52    .38     11    .28     10      0.    127      0.
C
C         F6 IS A STRING TRANSFER FUNCTION
F 6       0    14.1     16    140    320    130    700    500    160    210    200
     80    40     80     50     20     20     15     10
C
C         F7 IS A  STRING ENVELOPE
F 7       0     7.1      0.     18    .42      3    .38      7    .64      3    .59
      7  .83      3     .8     33    .92     53    .89     30    .9      24    .86
     24  .89     24    .87     26    .88     28    .83    100      0.    128      0.
F 0      20
S
C     ____________________________________________________________
C      TEMPO
T 0      60      0   135
C
C         FIRST CORNETS BARS 1-6:
I 1       1    0.5     4261.63 227.0  .086  .134     2     4
I       1.5
I         2      1
I         3
I         4    0.5
I       4.5      1
I       5.5    0.5
I         6      1
I         7    0.5
I       7.5
I         8    0.5
I       8.5      1
I       9.5    0.5
I        10
I      10.5
I        11      1
```

(1) BEAUCHAMP, James W., 'Practical Sound Synthesis Using A Non-linear Processor (Waveshaper) and a High-pass Filter'. Computer Music Journal 3 (3), 1979, p. 42-49: For errata to this article see C. M. J. 4 (1), 1980, p. 2.

A FINANCIAL COMPOSITION

(In $flat minor)

Peter Herzstein

1. INTRODUCTION

This article is not written by a tax or financial expert. Instead, my purpose is to set out some of the financial/tax considerations that may effect the composer and performing artist in this society.

Initially, here are a few thoughts by which to **approach tax and money matters**:—

- How and from where do I earn my **income** (including dole) and what are the opportunities for improving it?
- Are those incomes part of my **livelihood**? — if so, they are liable to taxation (if there is enough income!). Dole benefits may be taxed.
- Your activity in music/composing/art amount to a **business** or livelihood or part of one. A **hobby or interest** in music is not sufficient to have any tax effect either for the income or expenses generated.
- What are my **expenses in relation to earning that income?** These are generally tax deductible expenses. Use an open imaginative mind to consider what **could be** an expense. Make a note of specific expenses and possibly related expenses. These can always be turned down later — but in the meantime if you don't ask for it, you wont get that expense.

As in any art or profession, taxation has technical as well as common sense aspects. It may be worthwhile, especially of you're earning net income, plus wages, plus salaries, plus fees of more than $4,196 in the year, to consult somebody who knows about tax and financial matters (even once, to learn what to look out for).

Here are some **basic facts**:—

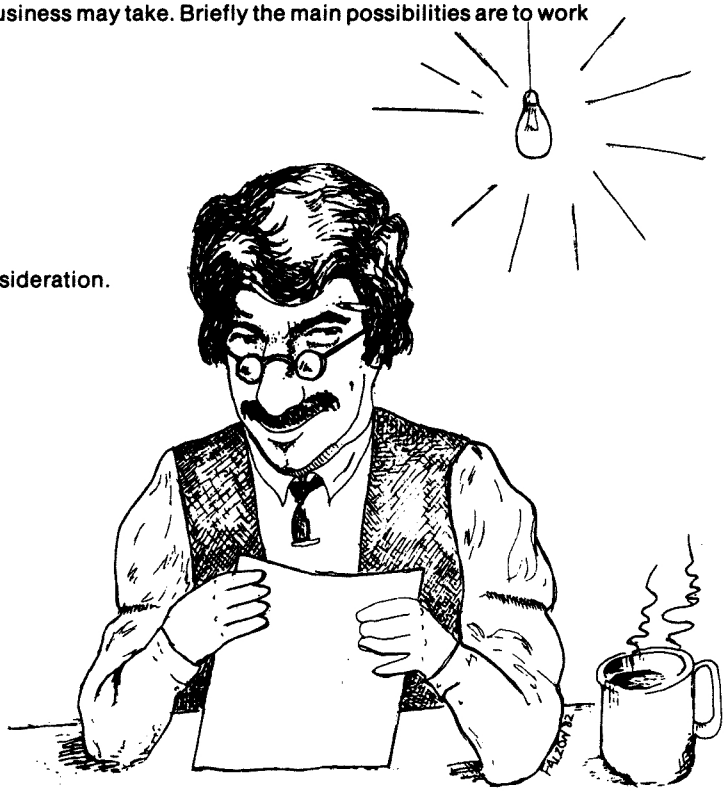
- If your personal net income is less than $4,196, no tax is payable.
- If your personal net income, generally, is between $4,196 — $17,895 you could pay tax at 32 cents in the dollar.
- In addition, for artists/composers, concessions are available whereby the above thresholds are affectively increased, if you earn "abnormal income" (basically lump sum fees). For example, if your total taxable income of $8,000 includes $6,000 in music prizes you will not pay tax.
- Companies pay 46 cents in the dollar from the very first dollar of net profit.

I personally find that business and tax **terminology** is often vague or takes upon contrary meanings even in similar contexts. My apologies if I have perpetuated the error. In particular when I refer to "**business**" or "**business activity**", I refer to your "activity" as a musician/composer/artist/performer using your profession or skills, whether those activities are undertaken as an individual, partnership, co-op, or company. I also use the word "artists" to cover musicians, composers, performers, authors and inventors who work in these fields for their livelihood. But the article applies generally to all people. Also examples are used purely to explain a point. You must judge your own situation by your own facts, figures and situation, based on the principles involved.

In the next issue it is intended to cover the structure that your business may take. Briefly the main possibilities are to work as:

an individual
an individual under a registered business name
a partnership
a company
a co-operative (company)
a musical society (company)

The concept of trusts is not covered but may well be worth consideration.



From a tax point of view, however, there are only 2 main distinctions relating to the structure of your business activities:—

(i) **PERSONAL TAX:** this applies to your wages/salaries **from all** the above, and your other self employed/partnership/co-operative profits. The tax rate varies from 0 to 60%.
(ii) **COMPANY TAX:** this is the tax relating to company itself, which is a separate entity from you personally. The tax rate is 46 cents in the dollar.

It may be advisable to use a different structure for different activities, e.g. form a company or use a registered business name for a music shop, yet perform as an individual at the Opera House, whilst working as a partnership to write a particular score.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF TAXATION (FOR ALL TYPES OF STRUCTURES)

The general principles are quite simple, even rational, and go a long way to explaining specific points that arise. Of course there are exceptions to the rules and deeming clauses (where red is deemed to be blue and so blue is it).

PROCESS	REFERENCE	TYPE OF ITEMS
Assessable income	2.3	i.e. income, wages, profits, dividends received,
expenses	2.4	i.e. expenses related to earning that assessable
deductions		income (plus previous deductible losses)
Equals:		
Taxable income (or deductible loss)		i.e. your net profit/income (or your net loss) for tax purposes
Taxable income X Rate of tax	2.7	
basic tax payable (before rebates)		
Basic tax payable Less: rebates	2.8	Rebates only apply to natural (i.e. not companies)
TAX PAYABLE		N.B. The **method** is the same for companies and individuals

YOU DON'T PAY TAX ON LOSSES. In fact business losses may be carried forward and used to reduce the taxable profits in future years, for up to seven years just as if it were a current business expense.

2.2 CAPITAL VS REVENUE

Taxation is based on revenue concepts (i.e. "Profit or loss, income or expenditure") as opposed to capital concepts. Thus it is important to recognise if a profit or loss is revenue or capital in nature. If you ask yourself "does it directly affect the profitability/income/loss level of my business" or "was it bought/undertaken with the purpose of making a profit" and get a yes reply, it is **revenue**. Thus if a music shop buys guitars to sell them, their profits are taxable. **Capital** items however relate to your business assets and liabilities which provide the basis by which you produce your income, but are not themselves bought to be sold as part of a product/service or for a profit. Thus if a pianist sells his piano at a profit, it is capital profit and is not taxable. The notable exceptions are that debtors written off (bad debts) and the write down of assets (by depreciation) are valid ("revenue") expenses. Also there is a caution in that if assets are bought and sold within one year the profit may be assessable income (and the loss is deductible).

2.3 ASSESSABLE INCOME

2.31 **This is generally** any income from your **personal exertions**, whether in your trade, profession (musician) business activities, partnerships, employment or other forms of **LIVELIHOOD**, or earned from your **business assets** (e.g. investments, equipment hire). Mere hobby income is not taxable, but the dividing line is a delicate one based on the facts. However, if it's more than a hobby, and it is part of your livelihood, so then are the related expenses deductible (see below). **Casual jobs** are not hobbies, and they produce assessable income. In order to claim the expenses related to you especially if you have a loss income, it is worth noting on your tax return, where it asks for your occupation, all the activities forming your livelihood (e.g. teacher, composer, band member, barman).

Note that a company, being a separate legal entity, will account for **its** income (and expenses) separately from you, as an individual.

2.32 Note that certain items are not part of your assessable income for tax (being "**exempt income**" as defined by the Tax Act)

- Gifts or bequests received
- Windfalls (e.g. from gambling or lotto wins)
- One half of the dividends received by a private company.
- Certain **educational** grants and scholarships (but not **research** grants) generally related to full time study.
- Alimony or similar items received by separated women (but not men!)
- Receipts of a capital nature (see 3.1)

2.33 Apart from the obvious general assessable items there are some particular items **also included as part of assessable income**

- Prizes related to your profession as musician, painter, author etc or your business activity. So if it is incidental to your profession as a musician that you enter a musical competition or award (e.g. the "Peabody $5,000 Musicians Award") and win it, that is assessable income. (But windfalls from lotto, unrelated to your profession, are not assessable)
- Research grants/awards (but not certain educational grants and scholarships) are also assessable. The fine differentiating line seems to be whether the award etc. is of an income nature related to the earnings in your profession. But remember that all expenses on the research would be deductible.
- Commissions

— Lecturing fees received, related to your professional capacity.
— Royalties on copyrights/patents. "Royalties" have a wide meaning, including payments to an author or composer for each copy/book/piece of music etc. sold by the publisher and also payments for the use or rights to use the music on a movie, film, video, tape or radio.

2.4 EXPENSES/DEDUCTIONS ("Allowable expenses", "Business expenses", "allowable deductions")

2.41 **The overriding common sense test** is that the expense can be properly deducted from your income if the expense is necessarily or reasonably incurred in carrying on your business/trade/profession which is intended to produce assessable income. i.e. the **expense is related to your income earning activities**. As an approach I suggest looking at the **nature and reason for the expense**. If, with an open and imaginative mind, you can relate this to your business and professional activities, then you should at least attempt to claim the expense. Your advisor, or the tax department, can always refute it. The result is that if your activities are not intended to produce income, then you cannot deduct the expenses. e.g. An accountant cannot claim as an expense, the relacement of strings on his/her guitar, but a guitarist can, as it is part of his/her profession. So too, expenses related to a mere hobby/interest cannot be deducted.

Examples of deductible expenses are business insurance, performance clothing and all production costs. It is not necessary that your expenditure be the most efficient way of achieving your business objective just that is is reasonably incurred towards that business objective.

2.42 Apportionment
If an expense is partly incurred for business and private ("domestic") usage, then it can be apportioned (split up) on a reasonable, rational basis between them. The business portion could then be a valid deduction. Private expenses, such as your personal living expenses, are not deductible.

Apart from the common sense approach, I have also **detailed some particular expenses and grey-areas which may be claimed as expenses, for tax purposes. The common sense test still remains the most valuable criterion.**

2.43 Self education expenses. The first $250 of self education expenses usually included within the total "concessional expenditure rebate" of $1,590, and is not therefore deductible (see 2.8). But other expenses on one's own education, after that first $250, are deductible IF they are related to you capacity, qualification, knowledge or skill to earn your (assessable) income. This is a question of fact and common sense. Hence hobby related expenses (e.g. an accountant's piano lessons) are not deductible.

Expenses to update and specialise your skills etc. are also deductible, as well as expenses to gain new skills for an existing job. Expenses can include tuition fees, text books, living expenses and transport (even overseas) or other items related to the education process.

2.44 Reference material. Text books, journals, periodicals (even this magazine) are deductible **if they relate** to or keep you "in touch" with or develop your job earning activities.

2.45 Interest. Interest incurred on borrowing money for, or, financing, an item related to your business or business assets is a deductible expense, (e.g. interest on loan to buy a synthesizer).

2.46 Entertainment. If you in anyway entertain people in relation to your business activities, it is a deductible expense, (e.g. the infamous business lunches, working breakfasts, but not your private entertainment). It is advisable to keep a receipt.

2.47 Travel and motor car expenses. The general rule applies here. But specifically, those expenses incurred travelling **between** various places of work (including your home office) are deductible, but not the cost of getting **to** work. Specific costs to transport your particular equipment/clothing are deductible, so are touring expenses, even overseas. Typical expenses include petrol, oil, repairs, licence fees, tolls, parking, car washes (but not fines) registration fees, depreciation on the car, repairs and insurance. Only that portion relating to business activities should be claimed, and 100% of the repairs (although this is in doubt)

You can either claim a set amount, laid down by the tax department, for each kilometer travelled for business, (e.g. 14 cents/km for a four cylinder vehicle) **OR** apportion total expenses between private and business usage based on the ratio of kilometers covered for each purpose over the year. Once the ratio is established, it will likely be accepted from year to year.

2.48 Home office expenses. To be a "home office" requires that you work or operate (solely or principally or significantly) from your home. i.e. your home is also a regular place for performing your business activities. Also, you must designate the specific areas in your home from which you work. It is not sufficient to simply work occasionally at home.

Once you establish that your home is also your office, then the normal principles of apportioning expenses apply, and should be done separately for each expense such as rent, rates, interest or mortgage, electricity, gas, water, telephone, repairs and maintenance. Apportionment can be based on floor space, time of usage, extra expense incurred due to business activity.

2.49 Repairs and maintenance. In general, repairing involves restoring an item to its former condition, (but not to change or improve its nature or character which is a capital improvement). Examples are —tuning a piano, replacing guitar strings, servicing musical equipment, re-painting. The repair should be a "revenue" nature, not capital. It seems that if the asset being repaired is used for private and business usuage, the whole of the repair cost may be deducted as a business expense. But there is doubt on this point, and the expense may have to be apportioned.

2.50 Leasing costs. If you lease your business equipment, the full cost is deductible.

2.51 Depreciation. Depreciation is an estimate of the decrese in value of an asset caused by time or usage. There are specific rules for calculating the depreciation charge, and it is a deductible expense if the related equipment/plant is used to produce your business income.

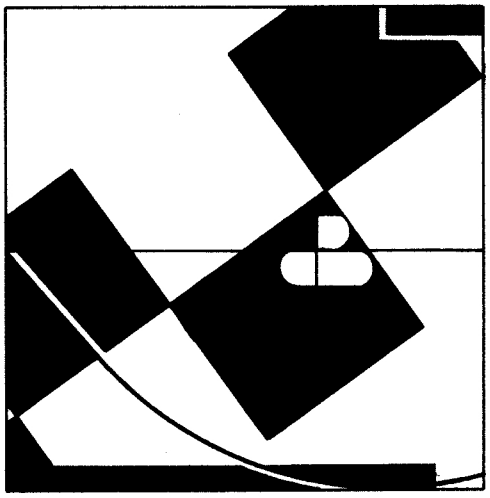
(a) **To calculate depreciation** — There are 2 methods acceptable for tax purposes:—

i) Straight line method (SL) Here a fixed percentage of the cost, and therefore an identical amount is expenses each year. (e.g. 10% of $1,000 = $100 for each of 10 years).

(ii) Diminishing value method (DV) Here a fixed percentage is applied to the remaining (undepreciated) value of the cost. This percentage rate is 1½ times that used for SL. In result the DV method produces a higher depreciation expense in the first few years, but a lower expense in later years, than the SL method as the table shows:—

Depreciation Deduction

	Diminishing Value Method	Straight Line Method
Cost of item — say music amp	$1,000	$1,000
Rate of depreciation (for amps)	22½%	15%
Depreciation 1st year	225	150
Depreciation 2nd year	174	150
Depreciation 3rd year	135	150
Depreciation 4th year	105	150
Depreciation 5th year	81	150
Depreciation 6th year	63	150
Depreciation 7th year	49	(max) 100
Total depreciation over 7 years	832	1,000
Remaining value of item	168	Nil



The diminishing value method seems preferable because it provides greater deductions earlier (when your pocket is still smarting from the purchase of the item) and you may not keep the asset for very long periods, however, once a particular method is chosen, it should be used consistently.

(b) **Typical depreciation rates, used for tax purposes are:—**

	Diminishing value %	Straight line %	(based on approx life span of years)
Pianos	7½	5	20
Band instruments	7½	5	20
Electric guitars & electronic equipment	15	10	10
Mechanical organ	15	10	10
Amps and microphones	22½	15	7
Motor vehicles	22½	15	7
Owned premises	4½	3	33

(c) In general, when your asset is disposed of, then the difference between the sale price (say $400) and its remaining value ($361) (i.e. cost of $1,000 less all depreciation deductions of say $639) will be accounted for as further income (here $39) or a further deductible expense. From an accounting point of view it is preferable to keep systematic records of each asset you have, its cost, depreciation rate and depreciation deducted.

(d) There is also the principal of **"replacement" tools/equipment** (e.g. tools, foot rests). Here, the tools of trade forming part of your basic equipment (which are not individually significant) are **fully** depreciated/expensed immediately as and when they replace your basic stock of equipment.

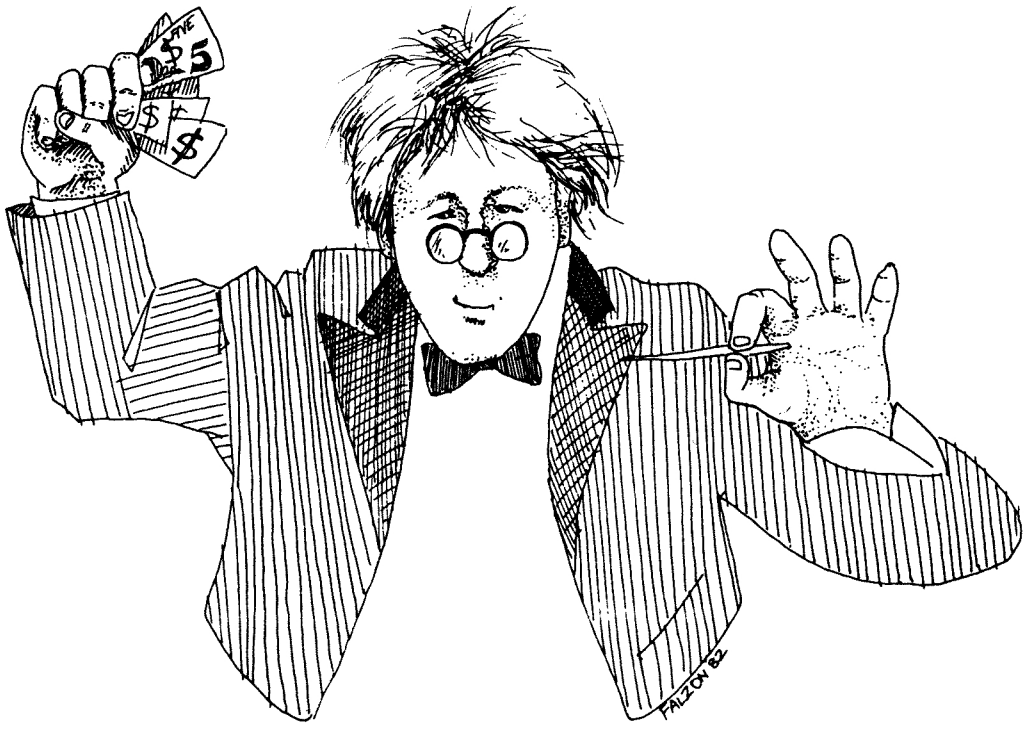
2.52 "Investment allowance", Although this is not an expense as such, for tax purposes you are granted a deductible expense (i.e. an "allowance") in accordance with an economic policy of encouraging investment in new "plant and machinery" and equipment. (cf the rule on capital items). The "allowance" is that 18% of the cost of new equipment, costing over $976, (and between 0.9% — 18% for items costing between $500 — $976) may be claimed as a deduction for tax purposes e.g. $180 on an instrument costing $1,000. You can still claim the normal depreciation expenses. The requirements for the "allowance" are that the equipment (etc.):— is held and used for over 1 year, is used solely within Australia and is owned by you.

2.53 Tax return expense. If you have your tax form prepared by a "registered tax agent" (and not all accountants are so registered) then his fee can be claimed as a deduction.

2.6 EXPENSES THAT ARE NOT DEDUCTIBLE

Personal expenses are not deductible (but see rebates at 2.8). Once again, ask yourself the **all embracing question:** is this **expense related to, or necessarily incurred, or incidental** to my activities **in making my (assessable) income?** Hence you will find the answer that the purchase of Super Dull Toothpaste which you use at home (sometimes) before going to bed is not deductible, since it is a private ("personal/domestic") expense, whilst the purchase of Wonder Flash Toothpaste which you use before going on stage to make your dazzling performance **is** deductible, as it is **related to your income earning activities.** Although the example may appear absurd, the principle involved is definitely not. However, in the case of performers/artists the dividing line may be difficult. **It depends on the facts.** As discussed an expense may be apportioned between business and personal usage.

The following are also not deductible — expenses of a **capital nature, legal expenses** upon forming a company, **gifts** to other people, (but gifts to charities over $2 are deductible) **fines** and the payment of **income tax** itself.



2.7 RATES OF TAX

I'm afraid artists, as individuals, are one of the possible extensions to the rule here (farmers are another), so I'll cover the general rule first and then the extension after. Note the extension does not apply to companies.

2.71 General rates of tax

Type of taxpayer	$ Range of Income	(Marginal) Rate of Tax	Tax at the Top of the Range (and Average rate of tax)
An individual	0 - 4,195	0%	Nil 0%
	4,195 - 17,894	32%	4,383.68 (24.5%)
	17,894 - 35,788	46%	12,614.92 (35.2%)
	35,788 upwards	60%	(approaching towards 60%)

Note that above tax rates apply PROGRESSIVELY e.g. if you earn $18,894

Nil	on the 1st $4,195, at 0%
4,383.68	from $4,195 — $17,894, at 32%
460.00	from $17,894 — $19,894, at 46%
$4,843.68	(average rate of tax 25.6%)

A company	$0 upwards	46% (private and public company)
A co-operative	$0 upwards	46%
Non-profit company (e.g. music club)	$0 — 416 graduating to $2,542 upwards	Nil 46% on the whole income

2.72 Rates of tax for artists/composers/inventors etc.
("Concessional rates of tax")
These apply to individuals, in the above creative trades only.
It is not possible to give you firm figures here, **but just a formula (the reference is to Sec 158B — 158E of the Income Tax Assessment Act).**
In the general rule above, the rate of tax is based on a particular range of income. The effect of the concessional rate is to lift the threshold of the ranges of income, at the same rates of tax, if you have "abnormal income". e.g. you may still pay 32 cents in the dollar when your taxable income is in excess of $17,894. But there may not be any benefit from this "concession", so beware.

"Abnormal income" is defined as being that income which you earn as:
a lump sum (e.g. prizes, awards related to your profession, royalty advances which needn't be repaid, a lump fee on the sale of copyright etc.),
plus your excess recurrent earnings (i.e. other earnings) which is worked out as being a minimum of $1,000, OR, if it is greater, this year's recurrent income less the average of the last 3 years recurrent income.

The **rate of tax to apply to your total income is, very basically, the rate that applies to your total "taxable income" minus 2/3 of your abnormal income**, (or your other income plus 1/3 of your abnormal income) i.e. the thresholds at which the rates of tax apply, have been changed, not the level of your taxable income.
Just to keep your eye in, the tax act differentiates between 2 situations which I explain by example.

(a) Where your total taxable income is greater than your abnormal income

e.g. abnormal income (prize)	$6,000	
other income (teaching salary)	4,000	
Total assessable income	10,000	
Less Business expenses	3,000	
Total taxable income	$7,000	Taxable income of $7,000 exceeds abnormal income of $6,000

General rate of tax	Tax rate is 32¢ in the dollar, for income above $4,196
Concessional rate of tax	is based on taxable income less 2/3rds abnormal income i.e. the general tax rate for [7,000 — (2/3 x 6,000)] = $4,000 i.e. the tax rate is Nil for the whole of your $7,000 taxable income

(b) Where your total taxable income is less than your abnormal income:—
(i.e. you make a loss on your other income less your business expenses)

abnormal income (prize)	9,000	
other income (teaching salary)	3,000	
Total assessable income	12,000	
Less business expenses	4,000	
Total taxable income	$8,000	taxable income of $8,000 is less than abnormal income of $9,000
General rate of tax		32¢ in the dollar for income above $4,196 is based on 1/3rd of $9,000 abnormal income only i.e. rate for $3,000 being Nil % i.e. tax rate is Nil % for your total $8,000 taxable income

But there are traps.

- — You must apply in writing to the Commissioner of Taxation (when submitting your tax return) to apply this concessional rate of tax (and refer to Sec 158B of the Income Tax Assessment Act)
- — There is no advantage in this concessional rate of tax in many cases. For example:—

	(c)	(d)
Abnormal income	12,900	9,000
other income	3,100	7,000
Total assessable income	16,000	16,000
Less: business expenses	4,000	4,000
Taxable income	$12,000	$12,000

General rate of tax at $12,000	(c & d) — 32 cents in the dollar for income above $4,196
Concessional rate of tax:	(c) Rate for [12,000 - 2/3 (9,000)] = $6,000 (d) Rate for [1/3 x 12,900] = $4,200 i.e. rate at $6,000 and $4,200 is **still** 32 cents in the dollar i.e. you apply the (concessional) rate of 32% to the **whole** of your $12,000 taxable income.

This is the identical position to the general rule and there is no advantage. So the points to bear in mind are:—

Be aware that there **may** be an advantage (in the thresholds of the tax rates) if your receive "abnormal income", especially in the stages when you are building up your income.
You may arrange your affairs such that you get most of your income as abnormal income (by lump sums to take best advantage of the concessional rates).
Apply the above process of calculation systematically (short cuts don't work!)

2.73 Rates of tax — whether to be a company or an individual

Subject to the concessional rates of tax for artists, up to $70,000 of (net) taxable income an individual will pay less tax in total than a company. However because of the progressive ("marginal") rates of tax, explained in 2.71, the question of whether you would save tax as a company or individual is answered as follows:—

From $0 to 17, 894	**— it pays to operate as an individual**
From $17,895 to $35,788	**— there is equal tax liability of individuals and companies, within this range of profit**
From $35,789 upwards	**— it pays to operate as a company**

2.8 REBATES

Rebates apply only to natural persons (human beings!) and not companies (which have legal personality only).

It is convenient to think of a rebate as a direct reduction or refund of your tax bill. It is different in nature to a business expense which only indirectly reduces your tax by reducing your profits. For example, a $1 rebate will reduce your **profit** by $1, and your tax by $.32 (if your tax rate is 32%). They also have a different social function, i.e. to reduce the tax payable of certain social groups, such as married persons, or people with children and other dependants. Note that rebates (unlike expenses) cannot create a **loss** or a physical refund of tax to you e.g. if you basic tax payable is $600 and your reates are $700, you will pay no tax, but will not get a $100 cash refund, or any loss to carry foreward. Rebates can be easily picked up off the standard tax forms.

2.9 TAX PLANNING

2.91 In the delicate terminology that surrounds this area, we may differentiate **tax planning** and organising your financial and tax matters to your best advantage, (including claiming your legitimate expenses), from **tax avoidance** (arrangements

by which to avoid or reduce your liability to tax) and **tax evasion** (arrangements by which you evade showing your legal tax liability). Tax planning is an area where consultation with appropriate experts would be advisable expecially where you have reached that problematic level of income where you may need to pay tax. There are of course arguments as to the social responsibility each person has to contribute towards general governmental services through taxes, but it is also true that no person need pay one cent more tax than he has to, and that it is legitimate and reasonable to arrange your affairs to pay the minimum, rather than the maximum, of taxation. This is the realm of tax planning.

It is noted, according to the plan outlined in 2.3 above, that tax may be saved by

— Reducing your gross income
— Increasing your expenses and incentives/allowances
— Altering your rate of tax (companies 46%: Individuals o,32,46,60%)
— Gaining further rebates from your basic tax liability (or simply applying for your rightful rebates)

2.92 Here are some ideas to consider for tax planning:—

(a) **Is it better to trade as a company**, individual or partnership etc. i.e. what business structure should you use. The primary points to consider are tax rates (see 2.73) and limited liability (discussed in next issue).

(b) **How should a particular transaction be arranged.**
e.g. a performer may benefit by arranging to receive lump sum payments rather than to spend his income in order to take advantage of the **concessional tax rates for performers**. (Refer 2.52) or arrange incoming money as being **capital in nature** rather than revenue (refer 2.51) For example to purchase a piano is a capital expense, for which only depreciation can be claimed for tax purposes. But if you lease the piano, all the lease payments are tax deductible. You may arrange your affairs to your best advantage.

(c) **Timing of your income and expenses.** You may be able to plan in which tax year you take up the income or expense, to suit your overall tax situation. e.g. when to do a performance or sell your music or when to spend your money on equipment or pay the expenses.
Further you can account for your transaction by either "cash" or "accrual" methods (i.e. how to account for it)

cash accounting — account for the transaction only when cash (or kind) has been received e.g. if for 8 lessons in June and July you get $80 at the beginning, then show the $80 as income in the year ended 30th June.
accrual accounting — account for the transaction in the time period to which it relates. So in the above example, your income would be $40 in one tax year, and $40 in the next (irrespective of when the cash was paid)

Once you have chosen the accounting method for particular areas of your business, it should be applied consistently for that and similar transactions.

(d) **Obtaining incentives and allowances.** (See 2.84)
e.g. to invest in new plant (see 2.84) allowance of 18% of the cost.
e.g. to invest in Australian films (a $100 investment creates a $150 tax deduction)
These depend on government financial policies.

(e) **Rebates.** (See 2.8) Consider which rebates apply, the level of income at which they apply, and how to "share" them between married persons (one person can take them all to maximise the advantage.)

2.10 SOME OTHER GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POINTS

(a) **The tax year** runs from 1st July to 30th June. Tax returns should be filed by 31st August.

(b) **Receipts and records**
Receipts do not need to be presented to the tax department when filing your tax return. However it is advisable to keep and file (alphabetically, date order, cheque number) all your business related expense invoices as well as cheque butts and bank statements, as they are useful in producing your accounts.

(c) **Tax returns.** There are different tax forms for specific business structures. However, the principles and amount of taxation are identical. The forms, if approached step by step, are very useful in working your way through your tax situation.

(d) **Payment of tax.** There are 2 distinct stages:
payment of final tax liability — the tax department will issue an "assessment" based on your tax return, or their adjustment to it.
The Tax payable is based on your net "taxable income", less the tax instalments you have already paid during they year. Final tax is due within 30 days of the assessment.
tax instalments — (e.g. Paye) these are only estimated contributions towards your final tax liability which you pay during the year (and attempt to avoid one rude shock at the end). Tax instalments are extracted from you in various ways:—

Paye — Pay as you earn — for wage and salary earners
Provisional tax for individuals. Payable on/after 31/3/83
Provisional tax for companies. Payable in 4 instalments from 15th August onwards.

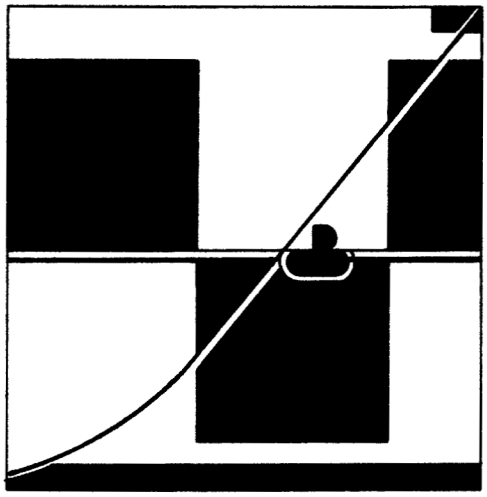
(e) **Objection to tax.** If you don't like how the tax department has assessed you, you have 60 days to object against the assessment. This is a most important time factor.

Although the principles are almost simple, so are the principles of music theory I believe, and since I could never understand them, good luck.

Annual Subscriptions are now available for NMA Magazine.
Send your cheque/money order for $8.00 to

NMA Publications
PO Box 1001
Brunswick 3056 Vic.

and receive your next two issues in the mail.



Hugo Farmer in collaboration with Robert Douglas